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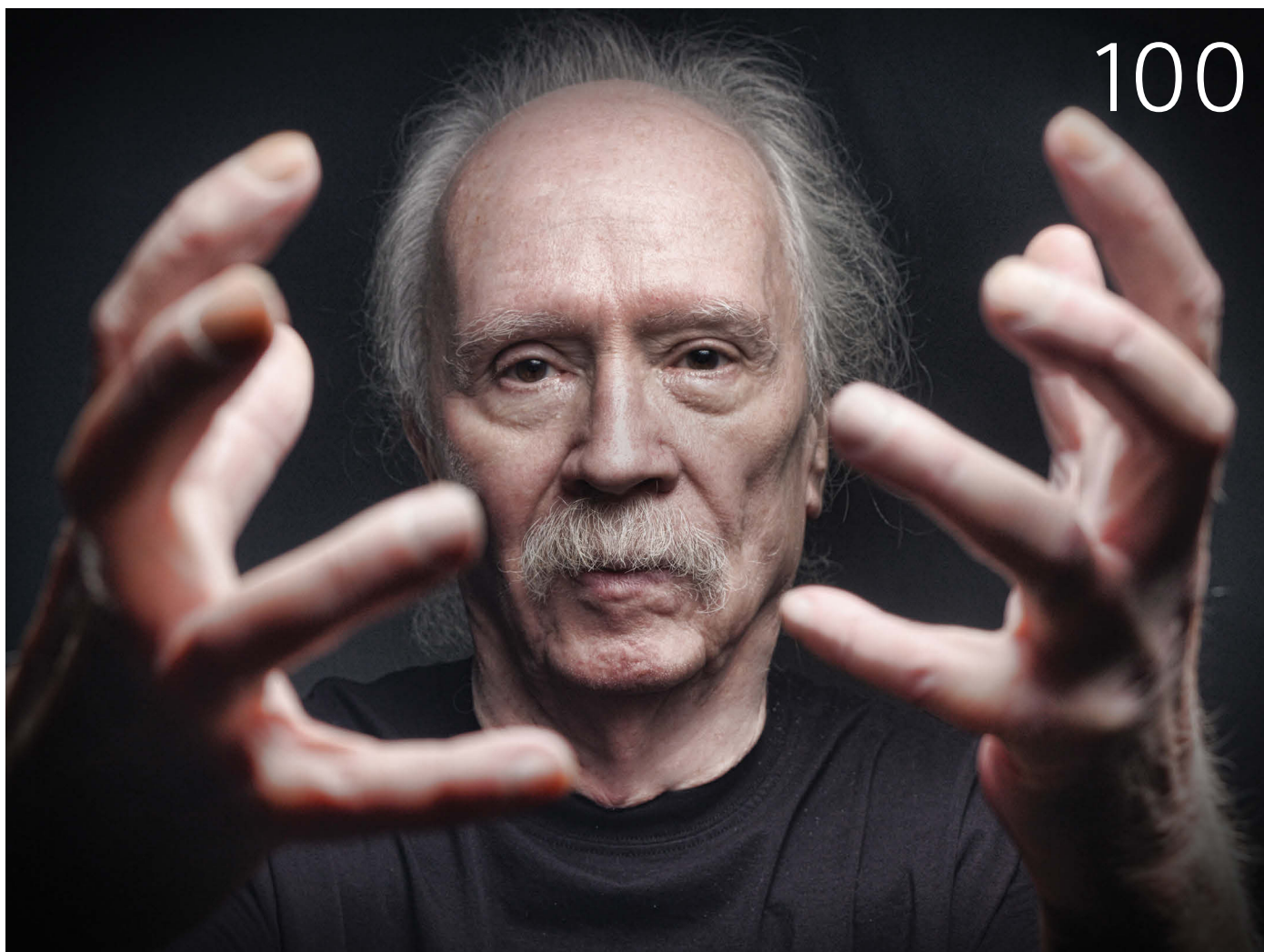
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CONTRIBUTORS



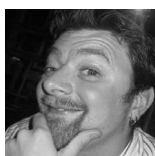
JEM ROBERTS

Jem is an author, storyteller, comedy historian, performer and magazine man, with official books on Blackadder and Douglas Adams.



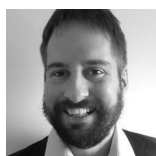
CLAIRE LIM

Music PR by day and mega geek at all other times, Claire has a penchant for anything comic books, robots, space and superheroes.



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A copywriter, author, actor and comedian, Greg is a pop culture junkie who owns more movies, CDs, books and comics than his house can hold.



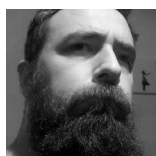
CHRIS HALLAM

An oversized, bearded, lumbering figure, freelance writer Chris has produced half a dozen books and tons of features and reviews in the last decade.



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Writer, game designer, sci-fi, fantasy and horror lover, author of the Seraph books and ex-boss of CVG - it's His Houlianness Mr Houlihan.



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Film enthusiast, horror hound, beard aficionado. Comic book junkie Michael is also an experienced professional wrestling journalist.



MILES GUTTERY

Miles is the man manning the Geeky Monkey social network. Yes, he gets paid to repost cartoons of Stormtroopers doing rude things to Yoda. Nice work!



ROB BURMAN

Determined to get his family to play something other than Cluedo at Christmas, Rob is on a constant hunt to discover great board games.



HUGH DAVID

With an in-depth knowledge of global genre film, television and animation, Hugh has seen more geeky films than you've had Star Wars toys.



JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan Clements' latest book is Christ's Samurai: The True Story of the Shimabara Rebellion, all about teenage sorcerers. Because... Japan.



WELCOME...

Every issue of Geeky Monkey we try to bring you the biggest interviews and features from around the Geek Dome, and I have to say that I'm particularly pleased with the calibre of interviewee we have lined up for you this issue. We set our course for the stars with Felicity Jones, lead in Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, who is excited to be part of such an esteemed franchise. Then legendary star William Shatner, meeting him at the Destination Star Trek event in Birmingham.

We were also lucky enough to be invited to one of horror master John Carpenter's recent concerts, and got to talk to him about his music and his movies. Not content with those three big names, we round off the magazine with an interview with Hannibal Lecter himself. Anthony Hopkins talked to us about his new TV series Westworld, and return trips to Wales.

Which neatly brings me to the rest of the magazine - our Map of Geek is in Wales this month, we've been replaying the Frogger board game, testing out PlayStation VR and getting excited about Christmas with the big movies, TV shows, games and... jumpers. It's a great time to be a geek!

Thanks for being on board with the magazine. If you know someone you think will enjoy Geeky Monkey too - get them to www.get-geeky.today where they can get 12 issues for only £30 for a limited time. If you have some feedback, catch us on Facebook, Twitter or through a ZX Spectrum using Micronet. Enjoy.

Nick Roberts

NICK ROBERTS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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search "Geeky Monkey" on SoundCloud
www.geekymonkey.tv

MEET JYN ERSO

ROGUE ONE

A **STAR WARS**™ STORY



FIRST THERE WAS PRINCESS LEIA, THEN REY AND NOW IT'S JYN ERSO'S TIME TO FIGHT THE CAUSE FOR THE REBEL ALLIANCE. THE WOMAN BRINGING THE CHARACTER TO LIFE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH SCI-FI ROYALTY FOR YEARS, WE WONDERED WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE CROWNED HERSELF...



Nearly two years have passed since rumours suggesting she'd clinched the lead on *Rogue One*, a new *Star Wars* movie, began to bubble, and now the big reveal is almost upon us. And Felicity Jones can't believe it.

"You think it can't get more exciting than shooting and production and being on set. And then you realise, now everyone is going to see it, and it's like this explosion of anticipation all over again."

Regal and looking much younger than her 33 years, Jones seems calm and practical, despite the word 'excited' being tossed around regularly with abandon. Having interviewed the Oscar-nominated star several times now, she never appears giddy or detached – there's always a precise, measured concentration present while in the room. A maturity far beyond her contemporaries. Must be the reason why she's scooping the hottest roles in Hollywood.

Since her blistering performance in *The Theory of Everything*, where she was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress, Jones has kept it interesting and unpredictable. Mystery thriller *True Story* with James Franco; Ron Howard's *Inferno* with Tom Hanks and a forthcoming tearjerker in *A Monster Calls* with Sigourney Weaver. A fine collection of sci-fi royalty, but she has now trumped them all by taking the lead in a *Star Wars* movie. Her biggest career highlight since the Oscars comes in the form of Jyn Erso, a freedom fighter who leads the Rebellion in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*.

And that's about as much as we know and learn as the actress tries to promote the blockbuster that hits cinemas on 16 December. Navigating the tricky terrain, she instead speaks about her feelings on landing the hotly contested role and what it means to her to be a British female leading the pack. Guarded, she also talks about the simpler facets of her early screen career, the decision making process and her reaction when being nearly typecast.

So here we are, talking about a film you can't really talk about.

It's a strange thing, this phenomena that's grown and grown [of not talking about the movie], but it's sort of a cause and effect from

intense internet, online scrutiny. And it makes it all the more exciting. I hate spoilers, I hate knowing anything before I go to see it at the cinema. So I'm all for it.

Though it makes it difficult for you to conduct a normal interview!
It's not that hard.

Are you actually in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, or is it a big gag?
I'm definitely in it. I think that would be too elaborate a cover up even for me. Unless the joke's on me.

We're going to safely assume that's not the case. Have you seen the movie yet?

I've seen parts of it. Quite a bit, and I think I was proper shaking with excitement. I still can't quite believe that I'm a part of this world, "I'm a part of a galaxy far far away." You can't help but have an intake of breath when you think of how big a moment this is. I'm so excited to see the whole film in its entirety.

So the call comes saying, "We want you for the lead in the new *Star Wars* movie." What goes through your mind?

Is this a mistake? Have you got the wrong person? Yeah, and then, oh my god, this isn't a joke, I'm sitting with Gareth Edwards and he's telling me the story and about these characters and Stormtroopers and weird fantastic creatures and space monkeys with lasers blasters, and it doesn't seem to matter that I've never done anything this physical before. Yes, "this is not a dream, oh my god, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." It's life-changing and those opportunities don't come easy. You know, people keep asking me, was there hesitation on my part before saying yes? And I couldn't accept fast enough.

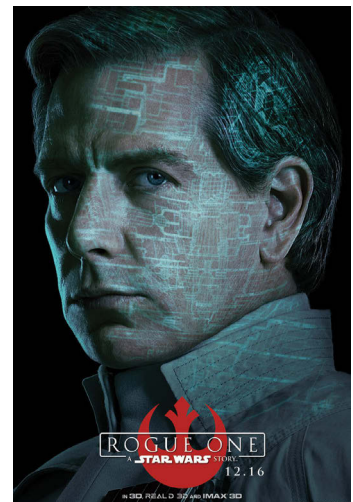
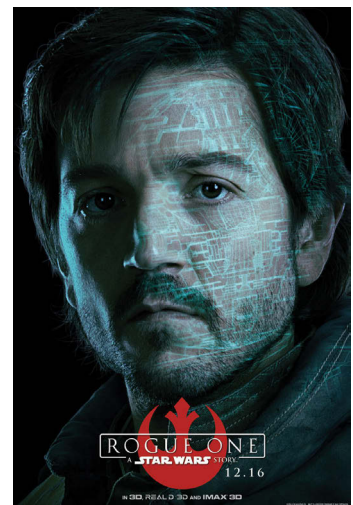
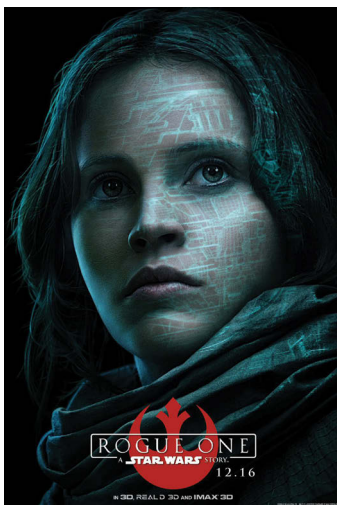
After the elation, must come the fear?

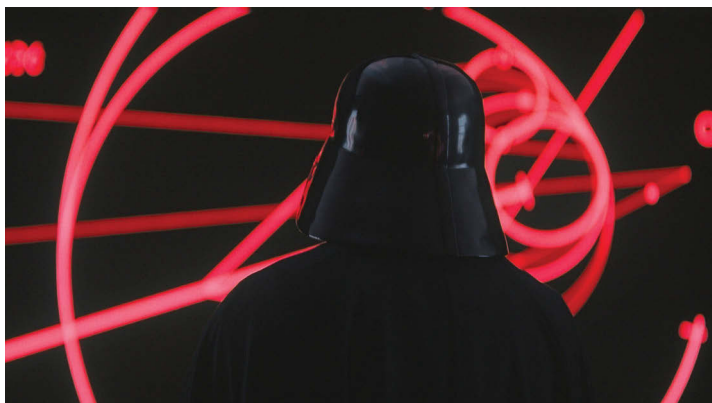
There wasn't ever any real trepidation. Certainly a few jitters, but it's the challenge that's ahead, getting to push myself and learn all these kung fu moves which was really cool... ►



**“I THINK IT’S REALLY COOL
THAT IT’S WOMEN AT THE
FOREFRONT OF THIS NEW
GENERATION OF STAR WARS.
AND BRITISH WOMEN NO LESS.”**

Walt Disney and Lucasfilm have created a powerful set of character poster images for *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, showing the Rebels before they set off to steal the Death Star plans, and one of the Imperial enemy. Clockwise from top-left: Jyn Erso, Baze Malbus, Bodhi Rook, Captain Cassian Andor, Director Orson Krennic, Saw Gerrera, K-2SO and Chirrut Îmwe.





...you could take on any muggers on the street now?

Oh yeah, I've learned some tricks, there are some moves there. You don't spend hours and hours with kung fu trainers for months and not learn something... I haven't had the chance to try it out and hopefully, I don't have to.

Are you a changed person since playing Jyn Erso?

The whole experience has been life-changing, I cannot put it any other way other than life-changing. Every day on set, the bar, the level of intense amazement was raised. When I thought it couldn't get any better, this circus of delights kept delivering beyond my most imaginative expectations.

It must be the strangest experience to be on set, in this otherworldly world, surrounded by aliens and knocking out stormtroopers with kung fu moves, and then going home and being normal. Can you be normal or is it too difficult to pull yourself out of?

I think it's harder to maybe pull yourself out of something that's closer to real life where you can find so many resemblances that remind you of work and that headspace you've been occupying. Or you find you can remain there for longer stretches because you don't have to make as much of a leap.

It's completely different when you're working on something like this. You can hang up your gun belt and go home and relax for the evening and switch off. With lots of bruises, I'm mostly just exhausted [laughs]. I know what you mean, it is strange when you've been in that world and then you're in the pub a couple of hours later having a normal conversation. But it's the job. It's all part of what we do.

After Rey, and of course Princess Leia, Jyn is the next kick ass female ruling the Star Wars galaxy, do you think it says a lot about how times have changed?

I think it's really cool that it's women at the forefront of this new

generation of Star Wars. And British women no less. Daisy and I are really lucky to be in the positions that we're in and that has a lot to do with Kathleen Kennedy [Lucasfilm Producer], opening the doors for these determined, strong, intelligent female characters and I'm so chuffed and proud to be part of that revolution.

And I'm so happy that it's heading towards this deviation away from paper thin characters for women, largely because cinema and Hollywood is very significant in the portrayal of women... in that it reflects reality. There's so much sway, you have to have complex, detailed characters with depth, for women and men.

And I read you said Sigourney Weaver had laid the path for characters like Jyn and Rey...

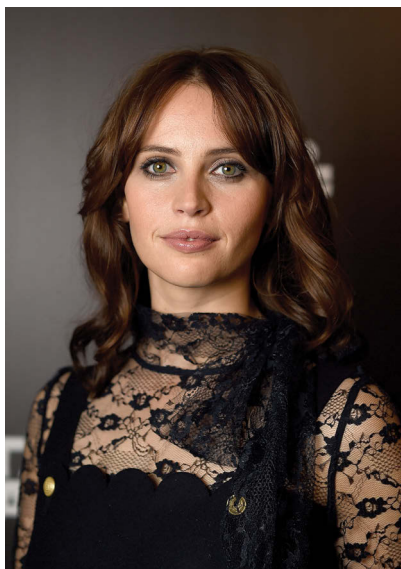
She was the trailblazer, not only in that genre but on screen as a whole. And I said that to her while we did A Monster Calls, I'm sure she hears it all the time, but I had to let her know about the influence she had over me, like this crazed fan.

Once the movie comes out, I'm sure you're being told you'll be hounded by fans morning, noon and night. But do you really see that happening?

I don't think it will change, I really don't. I still take the Tube to work, take it home. I think it's a lot to do with how I don't look like myself in these roles, it helps me blend in. It just doesn't happen really. And I'm not waiting for it to happen after December, Daisy was saying she was constantly told, "You won't be able to walk to Sainsbury's, you'll be mobbed." Hasn't happened.

What's it like to be incarnated in action figure form?

That is the most bizarre thing. To see yourself in that... it's utterly surreal. You see the level of detail that's gone into it, the clothes, the gun belt, the facial features, it actually looks like me and that's so very 'out of body' to see yourself shrunk down. In a good way, I highly recommend it. ►



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

THE WORST WITCH [1998]

// ETHEL HALLOW, ITV, 11 EPISODES

DOCTOR WHO [2008]

// ROBINA REDMOND, BBC, 'THE UNICORN AND THE WASP' EPISODE

BRIDESHEAD REVISTED [2008]

// CORDELIA FLYTE, ZENTERTAIN

CEMETERY JUNCTION [2010]

// JULIE KENDRICK, COLUMBIA PICTURES

THE TEMPEST [2011]

// MIRANDA, WALT DISNEY

INVISIBLE WOMAN [2014]

// NELLY TERNAN, SONY PICTURES

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2 [2014]

// FELICIA HARDY, MARVEL/COLUMBIA PICTURES

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING [2015]

// JANE WILDE HAWKING, UNIVERSAL PICTURES

TRUE STORY [2015]

// JILL BARKER, FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

A MONSTER CALLS [2017]

// CONOR'S MOTHER, FOCUS FEATURES

INFERNO [2016]

// SIENNA BROOKS, COLUMBIA PICTURES

ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY [2016]

// JYN ERSO, LUCASFILM/WALT DISNEY



It seems to be a growing trend, actors subverting expectation, is that what you're doing with your recent role choices?

I never want to categorise myself, ever. I did a couple costume dramas and I got a ton of similar scripts because that's how I was being interpreted as an actress, that was my niche. If I feel I'm being pushed into a corner, I'll intuitively dart out of there and move into somewhere else. I'm sure I'll get an action script or two coming my way after this.

So what's after Star Wars for you then?

So after this, I don't know really. I'd like to do a comedy maybe, I haven't done one in a while.

For a young actress you've enjoyed some remarkably rich, fleshed out roles. Is that from shrewd decision making?

I genuinely think I'm steeped with luck with the work and the directors I've had the chance to work with, and the roles I've been

gifted. I don't know how I've managed that. I guess it's down to openness within your relationships, be it with the director, or the writer. Knowing your character and bringing suggestions that kind of tailor more of a personal touch to you as an actor which helps it feel less clichéd and superficial.

And then, yes, I've been very lucky, I can't deny. You know, a couple of years ago I didn't have that luxury as much, having the open dialogue, I just did whatever job came my way because I needed to eat and pay rent and I was happy to be just working. But now, it's... there's more room for discussion and examination of nuances and idiosyncrasies.

So any secrets you can tell us about your upcoming projects?

There's a couple of things that I am working on right now, that I can't say too much about. Which seems to be the story of my life these days [laughs]. **GM**

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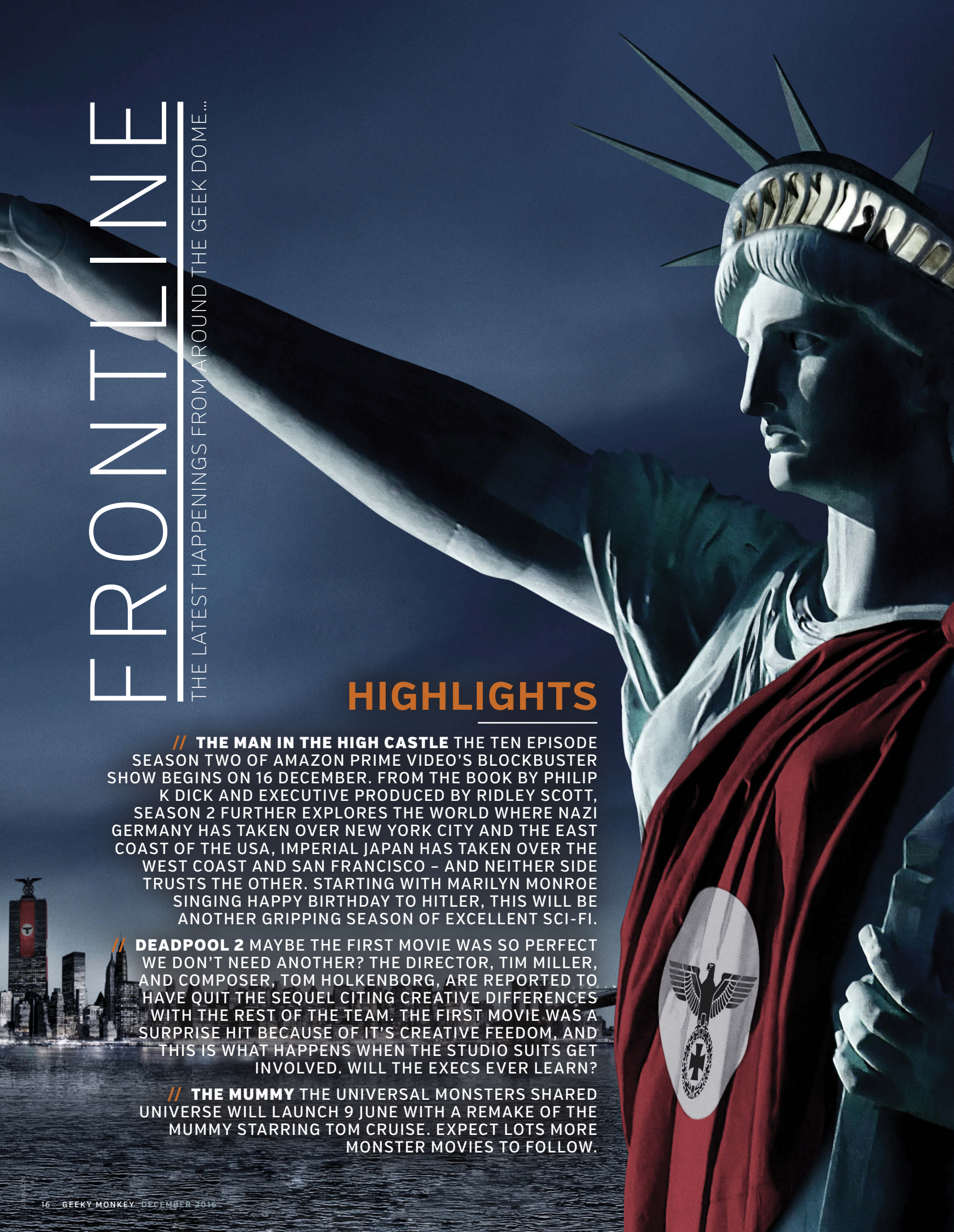
THE LATEST HAPPENINGS FROM AROUND THE GEEK DOME...

HIGHLIGHTS

// **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** THE TEN EPISODE SEASON TWO OF AMAZON PRIME VIDEO'S BLOCKBUSTER SHOW BEGINS ON 16 DECEMBER. FROM THE BOOK BY PHILIP K DICK AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY RIDLEY SCOTT, SEASON 2 FURTHER EXPLORES THE WORLD WHERE NAZI GERMANY HAS TAKEN OVER NEW YORK CITY AND THE EAST COAST OF THE USA, IMPERIAL JAPAN HAS TAKEN OVER THE WEST COAST AND SAN FRANCISCO - AND NEITHER SIDE TRUSTS THE OTHER. STARTING WITH MARILYN MONROE SINGING HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO HITLER, THIS WILL BE ANOTHER GRIPPING SEASON OF EXCELLENT SCI-FI.

// **DEADPOOL 2** MAYBE THE FIRST MOVIE WAS SO PERFECT WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER? THE DIRECTOR, TIM MILLER, AND COMPOSER, TOM HOLKENBORG, ARE REPORTED TO HAVE QUIT THE SEQUEL CITING CREATIVE DIFFERENCES WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM. THE FIRST MOVIE WAS A SURPRISE HIT BECAUSE OF IT'S CREATIVE FREEDOM, AND THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE STUDIO SUITS GET INVOLVED. WILL THE EXECS EVER LEARN?

// **THE MUMMY** THE UNIVERSAL MONSTERS SHARED UNIVERSE WILL LAUNCH 9 JUNE WITH A REMAKE OF THE MUMMY STARRING TOM CRUISE. EXPECT LOTS MORE MONSTER MOVIES TO FOLLOW.



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NEWS BITES

WE HAVE A NEW LANDO

With multiple Star Wars movies in production, the news keeps coming thick and fast from Lucasfilm. The Disney-owned company has just announced that Donald Glover will be playing a young Lando Calrissian in the as-yet untitled Han Solo Star Wars movie. Glover has previously starred in Atlanta, the FX series, Community and appears in the upcoming Spider-Man: Homecoming. They already have their Han Solo – Alden Ehrenreich who was in Hail, Caesar! Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, the directors, commented, “We’re so lucky to have an artist as talented as Donald join us. These are big shoes to fill, and an even bigger cape, and this one fits him perfectly, which will save us money on alterations. Also, we’d like to publicly apologize to Donald for ruining Comic Con for him forever.”



DOCTOR WHO EXPERIENCE TO CLOSE NEXT SUMMER

It’s a problem only a time travelling Doctor could fix: time is running out if you want to visit the Doctor Who Experience in Cardiff – BBC Worldwide has announced that it will close in the Summer of 2017. The exhibition has been drawing the crowds for five years, and only refurbished in 2014 with new scripted storylines from Peter Capaldi as the Twelfth Doctor. The reason? The Welsh government want their land back. Hopefully the TARDIS can relocate to somewhere more appreciative.



NINTENDO REINVENT GAMING... AGAIN

Those of you who have your ears to the ground when it comes to gaming will have heard of the Nintendo NX – the codename for the gaming giant’s new console. The rumours were that it could be a new handheld, maybe to replace the 3DS. Well, Nintendo has now revealed its hand in the poker game of console development – the NX will be called Nintendo Switch. It’s a hybrid home/portable console that has detachable Joy-Con joypads for multiplayer gaming. Keep the JoyCons attached to either side of the tablet-like screen and they become one controller for single player games. The concept is that players can play wherever they like, underlined by a teaser trailer where happy gamers are shown throwing impromptu gaming parties with their Switch. Innovation in the world of gaming is always welcome, and Nintendo has always been a company to push the boundaries of what is possible more than most. The full tech-specs will be unveiled in a live-streamed event in January, with the console going on sale in March. Nintendo is keeping many details of Switch secret as they have concerns that others could copy their ideas.

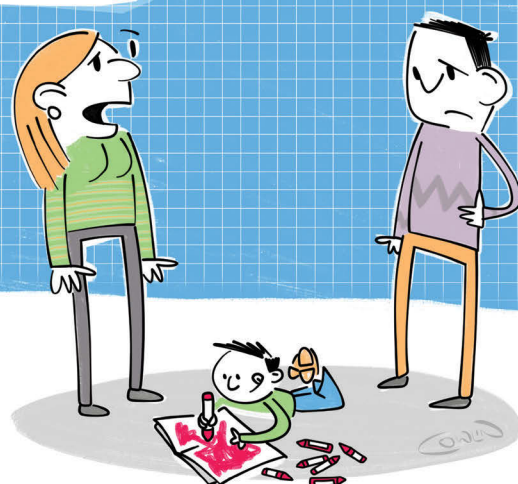
CLASSIC QUOTE

“Why do I get the feeling you’re going to be the death of me?”

OBI-WAN KENOBI TO ANAKIN SKYWALKER

THE GEEKY SIDE

IT’S NOT HIS *‘THE WALKING DEAD’* COLOURING BOOK THAT I OBJECT TO, IT’S THE COST OF ALL THE **RED** CRAYONS...



@garethcowlin

MAP OF GEEK

CONTINUING OUR GEEKY ROAD TRIP AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES, THIS MONTH WE LAND IN AN ANCIENT LAND FULL OF MOUNTAINS, CASTLES AND COASTLINE. PERFECT FOR MAKING MOVIES... WALES



While most holidays in Wales risk being rained on, any geeks visiting will be kept both happy and busy. On the movie front alone, you can start with the village of Crickadam near Builth Wells; this stood in for 'East Proctor' on the Yorkshire Moors in John Landis' beloved classic *An American Werewolf in London*. The Black Mountains doubled for the Moors themselves.

Two big-screen Robin Hood productions have shot in Wales; John Irvin's 1991 version with Patrick Bergin and Uma Thurman used the village of Betws-y-Coed in North Wales, while Ridley Scott's 2010 version staged its final Dungeness-set battle against invading Frenchmen on the beach at Freshwater West in Pembrokeshire, South Wales. Britain's other great mythic hero Arthur made an appearance for 1995's American star-studded big-budgeter *First Knight*, building its Camelot sets in North Wales by the lake at Trawsfynydd. Both these last two used much digital enhancement to achieve their final on-screen incarnations.

Back in South Wales, the big-screen version of Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* saw star in human form Yvaine trekking with Tristan (future *Daredevil* Charlie Cox) through the stunning Brecon Beacons National Park in Carmarthenshire. Their route crosses the hills

around Llyn y Fan Fach, a glacial lake near Ystradfellte, if you want to retrace their steps.

As usual with this column, James Bond and Harry Potter show up; the latter and his friends escape Malfoy Manor in *The Deathly Hallows* to arrive on a Cornish beach near Shell Cottage that is actually the aforementioned Freshwater West, while also earlier they are seen trudging beneath the Severn Bridge when they go on their whistle stop tour of the UK. 007, meanwhile, is supposed to be looking at an oil pipeline in Kazakhstan when Piers Brosnan's actually in the mountains of Snowdonia during *The World Is Not Enough*. Nearby Capel Curig and Ffynnon Llugwy lake double for Germany in the second outing for our final iconic British hero of this column, Sherlock Holmes, in his Robert Downey Jr. version.

On the super hero front, Marvel transformed an old military base by the village of Caerwent in South Wales into the HYDRA compound that Cap braves to rescue Bucky and his colleagues. Back in the Brecon Beacons Park, DC ended *The Dark Knight Rises* with Joseph Gordon Levitt's John Blake discovering the Bat Cave behind Sgwd Henrhyd, the tallest waterfall in South Wales

And of course cult TV fans cannot miss Portmeirion, set of *The Prisoner*, and Cardiff, home of the revamped *Doctor Who*, *Robin Hood*, *Merlin*, and more besides. **GM**



AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON



FIRST KNIGHT



HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS: PART I



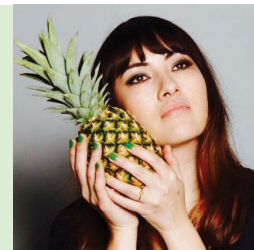
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH



ROBIN HOOD

Jabber Talky

OUR GEEK IN RESIDENCE, CLAIRE LIM, IS TAKING ON A BURNING SUBJECT FROM THE GEEKIVERSE EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH SHE SAYS...
"EQUALITY IN POP CULTURE STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO"



WITH RESIDENT GEEK, CLAIRE LIM

@WEECLAIRE

I read an interesting article online recently about the treatment of Harley Quinn's (Margot Robbie) on screen debut in the recent Suicide Squad movie. A lot was riding on the film version of the much beloved Harley as we don't often get to see well-rounded female villains. She was meant to be as crazy and dangerous as her beau The Joker (Jared Leto) but 'film Harley' fell very short.

Suicide Squad opened to mixed reviews, but has undeniably been a smash hit at the box office and a big money maker for Warner and DC. It has added some major plus points for the studio's planned DCEU. I'm not going to begin to write yet another scathing review of a DC movie here but what I will say is that Suicide Squad was average at best. The marketing was brilliant and curiosity over a film featuring some of DC's most beloved villains is probably what has kept it sailing into 'summer smash hit' territory.

However, it failed to deliver a cast of characters that should have been edgy and well-rounded. Harley Quinn was a typical gangster's moll, created in The Joker's likeness and style, who had no other motivations apart from getting back to her Puddin'. Her origin story was skimmed over, so we never really got a sense of the woman behind the crazy; she is nothing more than a violent, scantily clad sex doll, created in The Joker's image.

Although the big screen version of Suicide Squad failed to convey diverse, interesting characters, comics are slowly trailblazing the scene for equality. Hollywood certainly needs to catch up. Marvel currently has Kamala Khan in the role of Ms Marvel, a Muslim teen from New Jersey, and also revealed a permanent incarnation of a female Thor back in 2014. Valiant comics introduced plus-sized superhero and fangirl Faith into the mix last year - a nerdy everygirl who geeks out by day and kicks ass by night. DC's Batwoman is Jewish and gay and there's also an alternative Spider-Man, Miles Morales, who is half-black, half-hispanic.

I could go on as the list of comic characters flying the flag for humanity is ever growing, but the studios are just a little slower on the uptake. It's sad because I can absolutely imagine

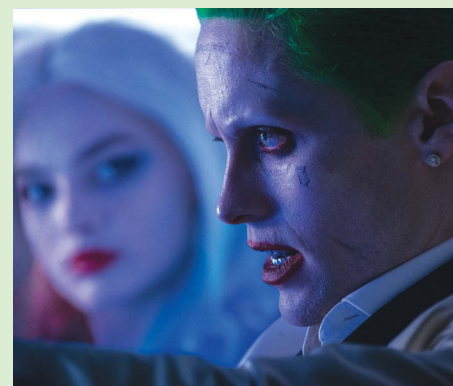
the MCU with the addition of a character like Kamala Khan as Ms Marvel, a fresh new take on a superhero and appealing to fans of other faiths and backgrounds. Nevertheless, the fact remains that casting choices come down to who is popular and 'acceptable' - I wrote about Scarlet Johansson being cast in a Japanese role for the upcoming Ghost In The Shell movie adaptation in issue four.

Although it feels sometimes that certain areas of the world are closing their doors and building walls, the fact still remains that we live in a very diverse society. Pop culture fans don't solely consist of straight white boys and girls - movies and TV shows need to keep

pushing to reflect real life. Despite this there are some advances being made and, of course, I see and feel the difference in mainstream media compared to when I was young, but it's still not enough. Sometimes it feels like we're making leaps forward (Star Trek Beyond featured an openly gay Sulu) but then giant strides backwards (unimaginative, stereotyped movie characters like the aforementioned Harley Quinn).

I've absolute faith that the creative arts will continue to silently push and pull mainstream culture in the right direction, but for now the powers that be need to roll up their sleeves because there's a lot more work to be done. **CL**

A LOT WAS RIDING ON THE FILM VERSION OF THE MUCH BELOVED HARLEY AS WE DON'T OFTEN GET TO SEE WELL-ROUNDED FEMALE VILLAINS



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15



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OH MY GOD, THEY KILLED...

...ABRAHAM AND GLENN IN ONE EPISODE! WE DISECT THE WALKING DEAD CONTROVERSY



Well, how was it for you? We refer, of course, to the explosive opening episode of *The Walking Dead*'s seventh season, a gruelling hour of TV even by the harrowing standards set by the previous six years. The gruesome end of two favourite characters seems to have divided fans, with one posting on Facebook, "That's it, I'm out!" The show's previous season concluded with a monster cliffhanger; the survivors on their knees, captured by the nefarious Negan, and staring down the barrel of one of their number being murdered. Who lived and who died? We had to wait several months to find out.

In the event, showrunners Scott Gimple and Robert Kirkman offered to pull the rug from under viewers' feet, killing off two cast regulars in an astonishingly bleak but compelling episode. Michael Cudlitz's Abraham was a favourite to go based on internet scuttlebutt, and so it proved to be – the mustachioed mercenary managed to spit out the memorable final line of "suck my nuts" before seeing his skull turned to mush at the hands of barbed wire-wrapped baseball bat Lucille. Clearly not content with offering one of the more visceral special effects moments of recent memory, however, this comparatively minor character was joined by the beloved Glenn.

With a gruesome visual lifted almost panel-for-shot from the comic book, this scene would have provided nightmare fuel for countless viewers. The shock alone of a second victim probably caused

eyeballs to bulge from sockets even further than those of the hapless casualty, but the way Glenn was mercilessly dispatched... shudder. Throw in Rick's desperate search for an axe amidst a Walker-infested fog, and the toe-curling tense moment where we thought he was actually broken enough to sever his own son's arm (be honest, how many of you were screaming "don't do it!" at the screen? We certainly were), and you have the makings of one of the most unforgettable season premieres in history.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

How did the actors portraying the fallen take the events? For his part, Steven Yeun seems philosophical about losing his paycheck after portraying Glenn for six seasons. Addressing the audience of panel show *Talking Dead* immediately after the episode aired, he explained that, "The death in the comic... Robert wrote such a messed-up but at the same time incredible way to take something away, to make a story as impactful as it is. When you read that comic [Steven is referring to issue 100 of *The Walking Dead*], you kinda don't want that to go to anyone else – it's such an iconic moment. I think I even said that, 'don't give that to anybody else'. It's a gnarly thing to say, but sincerely, living that out was very wild, but at the same time, that moment happening and being realised on television, doing it the way we did it, I think is brave and at the same time super affecting. That was the motivation."

"So what's my motivation for this scene?" "Err... you've been smashed over the head by a barbed wire baseball bat, react to that!"



CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET?

Yeun concedes that the events of this episode were not easy to film, especially as we was the keeper of pop culture's biggest secret for months. He told the Talking Dead audience, "Going into it, there was excitement. When you know something somebody else doesn't know, you're like... yeah! Then, after a while, you're all, 'I don't like knowing this by myself,' and then you just dive into a hole after a while because you're not allowed to say anything!" Like the rest of us, he is also struggling to acknowledge that Glenn is really gone. "I don't know if I've fully processed it yet," he told Entertainment Weekly after being asked for his feelings on the character's death. "This is something that will hit me maybe a couple of months from now. Or maybe it'll hit me next year. Maybe it'll be when I'm 45 and all of a sudden I'm just crying in my kitchen and I can't explain why!"

Michael Cudlitz, meanwhile, was just grateful to last as long as he did. He told Talking Dead, "For anyone who follows the graphic novel, Abraham was on borrowed time. Denise took his death gracefully, thank you [the character of Denise Cloyd took an arrow to the head in S6E14, 'Twice as Far', a fate that befell Abraham in the comic book]. I think at that point he was beyond where he was in the graphic novel, and I knew that Mr Kirkman wasn't happy about how he took Abraham out in the graphic novel, so I was curious to see where we go from there. I think Abraham made it to clear to Negan that if he was gonna take somebody, take me if it'll help protect the rest of the group."

And on his final words? "Come on, I think saying 'suck my nuts' is always satisfying! I think if Abraham was gonna go out, the writers had a tough job including any kind of dialogue exchange for him because of how we left the last season. To actually insert something in there, I thought was awesome. I think it was very appropriate for him to go out that way."

But what of the Big Bad Wolf himself, Negan? Despite being arguably the most despicable character on television today (there's a certain irony to the restrictions of American cable television censorship that enabled Negan to cave in the skulls of two human beings, but dared not replicate the language of his printed counterpart, who has vocabulary to shame a drunken sailor with Tourette's syndrome), we could barely tear our eyes away from the screen. This was largely thanks to the superlative, scenery-chewing performance of Jeffrey Dean Morgan, and the actor has intimated that he may be sticking around beyond this year for the recently-renewed season eight. Does this suggest that the show will follow the lead of its source material and provide some flashbacks to Negan's past that outline just how he became such an utter git? You'll have to forgive Geeky Monkey for saying this, but we hope so.

The devil may be scarier when you don't understand his motivation, but any excuse to get more Morgan on our screens should be seized. Unrelenting, unforgiving and emotionally exhausting it may be, but The Walking Dead is must-see TV once again. **GM**



DESTINATION STAR TREK

THE MANY GENERATIONS OF STAR TREK CAME TOGETHER IN BIRMINGHAM TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THIS VENERABLE FRANCHISE AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE AS THE SHOW PREPARES TO ONCE AGAIN REACH FOR THE STARS...

Destination Star Trek Europe 3 beamed down to Birmingham, England on the weekend of the 7-9 October, bringing with it a plethora of stars from film and television as well as thousands of Trek-hungry fans. Filling the cavernous Hall 4 of the National Exhibition Centre, Destination Star Trek Europe (DSTE) gave fans the opportunity to meet the star's face to face, have their photographs taken with them on the bridge of the original USS Enterprise or its successor the Enterprise-D, party the nights away with fellow fans, buy exclusive merchandise, enjoy illuminating talks... you get the picture, the weekend was packed.

Headlining the event was Captain James T. Kirk himself, William Shatner. Bringing his one man show Shatner's World to the UK for the first time, he held court, telling tales of his time at the helm of the Enterprise and celebrating the 50 years Star Trek has lasted.

"We're here to celebrate 50 years of Star Trek. It's a showbiz phenomenon. 50 years ago, the Star Trek that I did went on the air and 50 years later, a lifetime later, we're still talked about. This magical show had enough magic to it to entice you to come here and talk to me about it 50 years later" enthused the legendary star.

Joining Shatner from the original Star Trek series were George 'Sulu' Takei and Walter 'Chekov' Koenig, both of whom entered the celebratory spirit of the event as Trekkies across the planet marked its five decades of boldly going where no show has gone before.

"It's the most extraordinary thing, to feel that we're still viable." Said Koenig, still impressed and surprised at the ongoing love-affair the world has with Star Trek. "That we're still of significance to the

public at this late day. No pun intended, it's the best of all worlds that Star Trek has given me."

During the weekend three stages – the main Enterprise Stage and the smaller Voyager and Excelsior Stages – were brimming with guests talks. As well as the members of the cast discussing their times on the show there were panels looking at the online game Star Trek Timelines, Star Trek publishing, cosplay, collectable Trek, quizzes and more. Panels included Nicole De Boer and Terry Farrell discussing A Tale Of Two Daxs, panels looking back at Enterprise, Voyager, DS9 and the original series. Christopher Lloyd, Marina Sirtis and Alice Krige discussing the movie series, Wil Wheaton at his first UK event since Star Trek Generations at the Albert Hall over 20 years ago, and so much more.

The nearby Hilton Metropole hosted two themed parties on Friday and Saturday evening with the Star Trek Rat Pack – Casey Biggs, Vaughan Armstrong, Jeffrey Combs, Max Grodenchik and Armin Shimmerman – performing at the Quarks themed party on the Saturday. And the party wasn't confined to the evenings. The anniversary spirit spilled over into the event and was cemented as 1,137 costumed Star Trek fans broke their own Guinness World Record in the process, overseen by Star Trek expert Richard Arnold.

Stage host Greg Grunberg, himself a relative newcomer to the franchise, summed up why Star Trek conventions are so important to the series. "It's an appreciation for this incredible franchise and what it means, and how important it's been throughout the years. It's still incredibly relevant, even moreso today, than it's ever been." **GM**



TREKKIE GIRLS AND BEYOND

Using their broad knowledge of the various Star Trek series the UK based Trekkie Girls hosted a variety of talks and panels on the Voyager Stage. Brimming with enthusiasm, these 24th century socialites worked tirelessly to bring the fun and excitement of the event to their many followers around the world.





A GATHERING OF LEGENDS

The bridge of the original USS Enterprise was a fitting location for such a star-studded gathering of Star Trek legends. Sulu and Chekov at their stations and Captain Kirk in the big chair, it seemed only fitting that they be surrounded by crew members of all the other shows.

“WE’RE HERE TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF STAR TREK. IT’S A SHOWBIZ PHENOMENON. 50 YEARS LATER, A LIFETIME LATER, WE’RE STILL TALKED ABOUT”

WILLIAM SHATNER

STAR QUOTES GARRETT WANG



During his 20+ year involvement with Star Trek Garrett Wang has seen and experienced plenty of amazing moments, but one stands out as a landmark moment for him personally.

“Probably the time at the end of my first hosting. I MC’d the first show and at the end of it the organiser got on stage and said “What do you guys think of Garrett as MC?” and they all stood up and gave me a standing ovation. They clapped and cheered so loudly the soundwaves made me step back. That was probably the most moving moment I’ve ever had.”

STAR QUOTES GREG GRUNBERG



Everybody has a slightly different personal Star Trek story, and even the stars of the films are the same. Greg Grunberg talked about his own entry into Trek.

“It was the original series believe it or not. I’m 50 now, the same age as the original series. I remember in my early teens discovering the series in syndication and watching it, and just being absolutely mesmerised by Spock. George Takei I always thought was amazing, and Kirk – forget about it.”



A STAGE FOR THE CAPTAIN

Opening the proceedings at the press conference was the one and only William Shatner. Having been a part of the Star Trek story from its first broadcast episode right up to the present day, he is as much a part of the fabric of the show as tricorders and tribbles.



A BORG FOR ALL SEASONS

Destination Star Trek not only gave fans a great opportunity to meet their intergalactic heroes, but to also display their lovingly crafted costumes and cosplay creations. The weekend brought Gorn, holograms, space hippies, Federation crew members, Klingons, Vulcans, mugatos and more, but few were as fearsome as this dead-eyed Borg.

STAR QUOTES VAUGHAN ARMSTRONG



Actor Vaughan Armstrong, who has played more roles on Star Trek than any other, discussed a Trek-related subject which has had a great effect on him. He talked about a school in a war-torn region that his fundraising efforts have helped to support.

"That school devised their program around the philosophy of Star Trek. They were some of the happiest kids I've ever seen. Some of the nicest to each other. The older kids care for the younger kids. They believe in a peaceful community. That moved me more than anything."

STAR QUOTES TERRY FARRELL



The actress behind Jadzia Dax, the first incarnation of Dax we met on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine looked back at five decades of Star Trek and made it very clear that her voyage is far from over.

"I'm so honoured and excited that it's 50 years, and I don't think I'll be here 50 years from now, but if I am when I'm 104 [laughs] I would still be coming to conventions if I could."

STAR QUOTES ROBERT O'REILLY



Inhabiting the role of Gowron for nine seasons split between The Next Generation and Deep Space Nine gave O'Reilly plenty of time to flesh out the character. Here on earth in the early 21st century, what does the actor think of the fandom that has grown up around the show?

"Number one, we're very eclectic. We're very accepting of all. And I say 'we' because I feel like I'm a fan too. It's just what Star Trek is and should be. It doesn't matter who you are, what you are, where you are, what form you come in. You can be disabled in many different ways, it makes no difference. We're the most eclectic and accepting group there is. Politically we are all inclusive. Even to a fault."



OH MY!

The inimitable helmsman of the Enterprise and later captain of the USS Excelsior George Takei took to the stage a number of times across the weekend, telling a rapt convention crowd tales of Star Trek, fandom and his extraordinary life in his own unique and ebullient fashion.

HERE TODAY, GORN TOMORROW

Stuntman Bobby Clark memorably portrayed the Gorn commander five decades ago and despite having a career populated with other notable work is best remembered for that classic encounter with Captain Kirk in the episode 'Arena'. It's therefore fitting that he should appear at the 50th anniversary gathering.



Q&A

William Shatner

ACTOR, DIRECTOR, AUTHOR AND STARFLEET CAPTAIN

The William Shatner charisma shone through on the huge Enterprise Stage in front of a packed auditorium of fans, but it was just as evident in a small side room where Geeky Monkey met him to ask some questions. Be in no doubt, after 50 years of having Star Trek in his life, William Shatner knows the galaxy is listening.

While it's true that time waits for no one, and even though he is 85 years old, William Shatner shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. Indeed, he continues to innovate and entertain in equal measure with a hugely successful one man show – Shatner's World – hitting theatres across North America and for the first time in the UK at Destination Star Trek Europe (which we are legally bound to remind you is brought to you by Massive Events, in association with Showmasters and Media 10 Ltd under licence from CBS Consumer Products). Alongside the only comparable geek icon of a similar vintage, the incomparable Stan Lee, he has just launched the new comic imprint Shatner Singularity Universe. He continues to ride in his three-decade old Hollywood Charity Horse Show, has new music in the works. In short, he puts most of us half his age to shame with his boundless energy and drive. The Admiral journeyed across the pond to attend the event and celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the evergreen franchise and took time to chat with the Geeky Monkey about life, the universe and everything.

I have two books out there now. One is talking about friendship and how difficult it is to make, sustain and maintain a friendship (he refers to the



I TALKED TO STEPHEN HAWKING ABOUT WHAT'S OUT THERE. WHAT DO WE KNOW? WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.

2015 book Leonard, about his friendship with the late Leonard Nimoy). And then a pure exercise in fun reading, an adventure looking at the FBI 50 years from now called Zero G. Next year, in the spring, there are two more books. One is a sequel to Zero G, the continuing adventures of the people in the book, and the other a book called The Spirit Of The Horse. It's written about the metaphysical quality of horses and humans. I have a charity that I run every year, and have for the last 30 years, called the Hollywood Charity Horse Show, which devotes itself mainly to children and riding therapeutic programs which now apply to veterans who come back from the wars with many of the same ails as the kids.

Music has famously been a part of your repertoire over the decades, your interpretation of Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds a particular favourite for impressionists. However, even a cursory listen to your 2005 album Has Been reveals a skilled lyricist at ease with exploring his own mind and the themes of his life.

Billy Sherwood of the group Yes and I, we wrote an album together called Ponder The Mystery, which is out there now (it was released in October 2013). We're going to take parts of that and parts of some cover songs and do a musical act. I'm also ►



in the midst of preparing several documentaries. Some of the documentaries I've made have been about Star Trek, but now I'm branching out and I believe I'm going to make a documentary about the group Yes. And I'm hopeful of selling a documentary called Young Guns of NASA looking at the young scientists who bring new ideas and new concepts. I'm also working on The Truth Is In Our Stars. In it I talk to a lot of famous astrophysicists, ending with Dr Stephen Hawking in Cambridge a few months ago. I talked to Stephen Hawking about what's out there. What do we know? We don't know anything. These are ventures that are interesting, beyond interesting, that I am looking forward to tackling.

With the passing last year of Leonard Nimoy it would seem strange at Destination Star Trek to not mention your iconic co-star. What is your favourite Spock moment?

There were many I suppose. As I recall we were doing a fight scene, which I used to enjoy, pretending to punch these tough stuntmen and then falling down. And Leonard said Spock wouldn't get into a fight, and he sort of made a pinch. He pinched me and I went with it and fell to the ground. Everybody laughed and there was the Spock pinch (Vulcan nerve pinch).

In a long and prosperous Star Trek career, what is your favourite moment of the last 50 years of the show?

I can't answer that because my life is filled with favourite moments. What I try not to do is look back at the past. I look forward to favourite moments coming up. This probably is a favourite moment today, everybody crowding around asking questions I can't answer.

Star Trek had a troubled birth and a difficult three years on network television before the open road of syndication gave it the cult following and respect it deserved. Back in the

IT'S REALLY WONDERFUL TO COME TO ENGLAND, AND SEE THE ENTHUSIASM AND AFFECTION. WHY IS IT SUCCESSFUL? WELL, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

day, did you have any idea how successful it would be?

That's like saying, "Are you aware right now that 50 years from now this interview will be on CBS Action as THE interview of the last 50 years." Could be. The thought never occurred to us. We were always in dire peril of being cancelled, so rather than thinking that 50 years from now there'd be this interest, we were thinking, "I hope we can cling on," if you'll excuse the expression, "for another year".

It's really wonderful to come to England, and see the enthusiasm and affection. Why is it successful? Well, that's a good question and I try to answer it in several ways. I think the conclusion that I came to is that science fiction in general and Star Trek specifically is mythological. The mythology of science fiction seeks to explain time travel, for example... anything. Name a science fiction concept and a writer will imagine what it could be, and you can't say that writer is wrong because none of us know what the next moment will entail, let alone 300 years from now. He or she might be right, that instead of expending the energy in a spaceship to go as fast as light, which will still take you billions of lifetimes, you could time travel. That you could press space and bring space to you is another concept. And you can't say that's wrong either. Because when we've examined quantum physics we see that what's in quantum is so bizarre that it beggars anything that's been imagined. So, anything that can be imagined might very well be out there. And that's why Star Trek is popular."



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US CHANNEL THE CW HAS DECIDED THAT 1980'S CULT CLASSIC MOVIE THE LOST BOYS IS RIPE FOR A TV SHOW REBOOT. AS STUDIOS WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH OUR CHERISHED 80'S MEMORIES, WE LOOK AT BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY...

FIGHTING TALK

THE LOST BOYS TV SERIES WILL BE...



...another dreary reboot

SAYS CLAIRE LIM

The 1987 *Lost Boys* movie is a classic in so many ways. It will be hard capturing the essence and feel of this film into a rebooted TV show because some properties are just “of their time.”

Before *The Lost Boys*, vampires weren't cool. Joel Schumacher's film about a gang of vampire teens in the fictional town of Santa Carla was violent, sexy and fun. Since then, we've had depressed vampires (*Interview With The Vampire*), glowing vampires (*Twilight*), Whedon vampires (*Buffy*) and ridiculous vampires (*True Blood*) but none capture that edge *The Lost Boys* had.

Perhaps if the show was set in the 80s, a decade now being revitalised after Netflix's hit *Stranger Things*, there would be some essence of *The Lost Boys* that fans old and new could appreciate, but the plan is to set the series over seven decades in seven seasons, starting with the summer of love in 1967. What!?

With this being the plan, *The Lost Boys* TV show will retain nothing of the essence of the original film. In fact, it will be *The Lost Boys* in name only. Let's pray The CW and Rob Thomas, who are developing the show, aren't attempting some sort of flimsy origin story, with the same characters and

BEFORE THE LOST BOYS, VAMPIRES WEREN'T COOL

a younger cast. Yawn and nope. What makes films like *The Lost Boys* so great is that there were no 'proper' sequels (let's forget *Lost Boys: The Tribe* and *Lost Boys: Thirst* for a moment). In 1987, the cast and script were perfect, and iconic flicks like this should be left untouched. There is no one who can replace the bad boy cool of head vamp David (Kiefer Sutherland) or the angsty 80's vibes of Michael (Jason Patric) and the ensemble cast of rag tag beach dwelling blood suckers.

Let's not forget how irreplaceable the Frog Brothers are and how amazing Tim 'Sexy Sax Man' Cappello – bulging oily muscles, 'saxing' it up on a hot evening. Pure 80's magic!

Yes, there is a whole generation unaware of the brilliance of *The Lost Boys*, but let them just watch the original. There's no need to shoe-horn a modern day version into an already bulging market of fantasy and superhero TV shows. No one really asked for a *Lost Boys* TV show – one thing about TV shows these days that I just can't stomach: all the damn reboots.



...a welcome return of vampires

SAYS LLOYD MANGRAM

Rob Thomas must have been inspired one day while working on The CW's *iZombie*, "Wouldn't it be a great idea to bring back that classic Eighties movie *The Lost Boys*?" *iZombie* itself was an adaptation from the Vertigo comics, and if everyone loves zombies so much, why not bring the vampires back too? I for one am completely on board with Rob here, I fondly remember the 1987 original movie, starring Jason Patric and Corey Haim as the young brothers who move with their mom to California.

I identified with those boys, probably because I was a young man myself at the time... oh where do the days go? I loved the story where the boys hang out on the Boardwalk in Santa Carla, noticing the missing posters for local kids, and the beautiful Star catching their eye, who's boyfriend is David, played by Kiefer Sutherland. A wonderful mix of youth, vampires and comic books, with the Frog brothers played by Corey Feldman and Jamison Newlander providing horror comics to teach the newcomers how to defend themselves against the vampires. What was the slogan of the movie again? "Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire." I think the movie tapped in to what most teenagers wished their lives were

like, instead of newspaper rounds, awkwardness around the opposite sex and spots. The big question for me is, will this new TV show Rob Thomas has planned capture the essence of the original, appealing to Eighties throwbacks like me, or is he going for a new audience, the potential vampire teenagers of today? Either way, I can see this as a welcome return of vampires to our TV screens.

All we know right now is that the series plans to spread its story over 70 years, starting in San Francisco in the Summer of love of 1967. I do hope they can get it right this time, as the previous attempts to bring back the glory days of *The Lost Boys* have been a massive disappointment for fans of the original. Director Joel Schumacher made a few attempts at a sequel in the 90s, then those horrendous direct to video movies were made: *The Tribe* and *The Thirst*, although I believe they actually made quite a bit of money for Warner Bros.

NEVER GROW OLD. NEVER DIE.
IT'S FUN TO BE A VAMPIRE

The 1987 vampire busting movie was shamed by two direct to video sequels.

YOUR SAY

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR THE LOST BOYS COMMENTS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER. HERE'S A SELECTION OF THE PRINTABLE ONES...

FIGHTING



Hollywood has lost its balls and just remakes everything that people hold dear because they think it'll make them money. Take a chance on something new and maybe you'll have a future classic on your hands.

JONNY BLAIR

The CW is on a roll with their DCU. As long as they employ the same strategy, think long term and do not sink their teeth too deep into homage then it will be time to sleep all day and party all night.

JAMES METHERELL

Thankfully the new Vertigo comic washed away the bad taste from the dire sequels, but is a TV reboot REALLY needed? That said though, the same was said about the Lethal Weapon TV reboot, and we're enjoying the hell out of that.

EDINBURGH COMIC CON

The only way this would work is if you have all the original cast members and tell the story of what happened next! I reckon that would work... but all new actors? NO!

NEIL RINGHAM

The 2nd film was pants, the 3rd I really enjoyed. Not sure how it would work as a series to be honest unless it was the Frog brothers adventures – now that I could watch. On another point, we could look at it as educating the masses who suffered seeing sparkling vampires and introduce them to the real deal.

CHRIS SHARP

The Lost Boys is one of my top 80s movies ever, but I can't help but think that a TV series would water down the film's impact. It just couldn't be the same.

PAUL MILNE

I seriously doubt that The CW can be trusted to cook up a version with the original film's – ahurm – bite.

MATT PACKER

The Lost Boys is my all time favourite film. From what I've heard the vamps will be the central characters and the series span decades. This might be cool.

ANDREW QUICK

What I remember most about The Lost Boys was that many of my friends wanted to dress like them. Those worn down boots, the ripped jeans, the long coats and big hair. Ahh, the 1980s was a decade of style. I bet The Lost Boys smelled though, probably of bat droppings.

CARL MAKEPIECE

I've had worse ideas, but they were all post whisky ideas, which don't really count.

HARRY MAPSTON

BACK

THE GEEKY MONKEY WORLD

WE'RE NOT JUST A MAGAZINE YOU KNOW, YOU'LL FIND US IN ALL THE USUAL SOCIAL PLACES AND WE HAVE A NEW PODCAST FOR YOU TO ENJOY TOO...

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Keep up with the daily news from the team at Geeky Monkey Towers by Liking our page on Facebook. You'll find regular competitions

to win some great geek gear, the latest movie trailers and all the gossip that keeps the geek train chugging on. You can also message us and get your views onto this Fighting Back page. Go on, get involved!

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There was a day when a hashtag was the extra crispy bits from a hashbrown with your breakfast... no more! Follow the Geeky Monkey

team on Twitter to fill the smart device of your choice with little nuggets of geeky goodness throughout the day. You can also enter our competitions on Twitter, and let us know what you think of the magazine.

PODCAST

[SOUNDCLOUD.COM, SEARCH "GEEKY MONKEY"]



The perfect accompaniment to Geeky Monkey magazine – a podcast full of geeks talking geeky. Our podcast is presented by Claire Lim with a helping hand from Paul Gannon. Interviews, comment, laughs, tears. Search "Geeky Monkey" on SoundCloud or iTunes and you'll find a wealth of previous podcasts that are well worth your time too.

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READING MATTERS

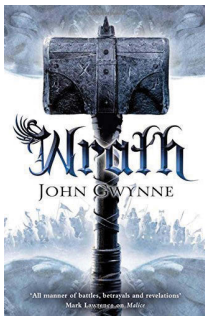
Words: JOHN HOULIHAN

Author of the Seraph books and former Editor-in-Chief of CVG.com

HIGH FANTASY, CORPORATE WARS AND NORSE MYTHS REINVENTED
COMBINE TO FORM THIS MONTH'S READING MATTERS

WRATH

JOHN GWYNNE



The fourth work in Gwynne's Fallen and the Faithful series may take a very singular approach to book titling, but events are heading towards a breakneck finale in the Banished Lands. The saga has been eulogised for its tight plotting and great characters, and even drawn comparisons with Game of Thrones and David Gemmel's Rigante series – high praise indeed. Wrath sees hero Corban captured by the Jotun,

warrior giants who ride enormous bears into battle, and he must now forge new alliances to survive. But with King Nathair holding three of the seven treasures and in control of the vital fortress of Drassil, the portal to the Otherworld yawns and demonic hordes prepare to engulf the world, in this searing slice of high fantasy.

THE SAGA HAS BEEN
EULOGISED FOR ITS TIGHT
PLOTING AND GREAT
CHARACTERS

THE CORPORATION WARS: INSURGENCE

KEN MACLEOD



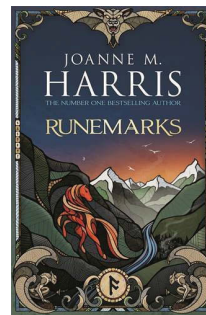
MacLeod was a close friend of the late great Iain Banks and this second book in his Corporation Wars series shares many of the themes of Banks' Culture: futuristic technology, drone warfare and the perils of AI, here filtered through the grubby lens of corporate greed. As rival corps squabble over the remote earth-like planet DH-17, Carlos 'the Terrorist' and his bloody mercenaries are released from

death's shackles and reborn with one goal – to wipe out their corporate sponsor's foes. But with old enemies circling and new allegiances uncertain, where will Carlos' true loyalties lie in this twisting tale of corporate voracity, double cross and betrayal?

OVER 500 YEARS HAVE PASSED
SINCE RAGNAROK, THE DAY THE
GODS DIED, BUT ADOLESCENT
MADDY IS STILL SHUNNED

RUNEMARKS

JOANNE M HARRIS



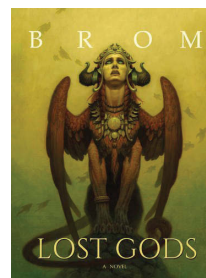
Harris' The Gospel of Loki was a fiercely entertaining read, a modern retelling of the ancient Norse myths, but shot through with all the mischief, cunning and cynicism of the prince of deceivers himself. In Runemarks over 500 years have passed since Ragnarok, the day the gods died, but adolescent Maddy is still shunned for the 'ruinmark' on her hand.

One-Eye, her outré friend, believes

it's a sign of chaos and the old blood magic, yet as the puritan Order closes its net, Maddy will have to confront long standing questions about herself, her mysterious parentage, and the powers which seem to have newly awoken within her.

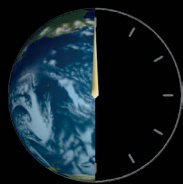
LOST GODS: A NOVEL

BROM



Brom may be better known as an artist, especially on D&D's Dark Sun universe, but latterly, he's turned his hand to prose as well as pictures. Lost Gods follows on the heels of Krampus and sees Chet Moran, murdered by an arcane fiend, descend into purgatory to save his wife and unborn child from damnation by finding a lost key. An interesting reversal of the Orpheus legend and lavishly

illustrated by the author himself no less, it promises to be a dark, harrowing but uplifting journey towards ultimate redemption.



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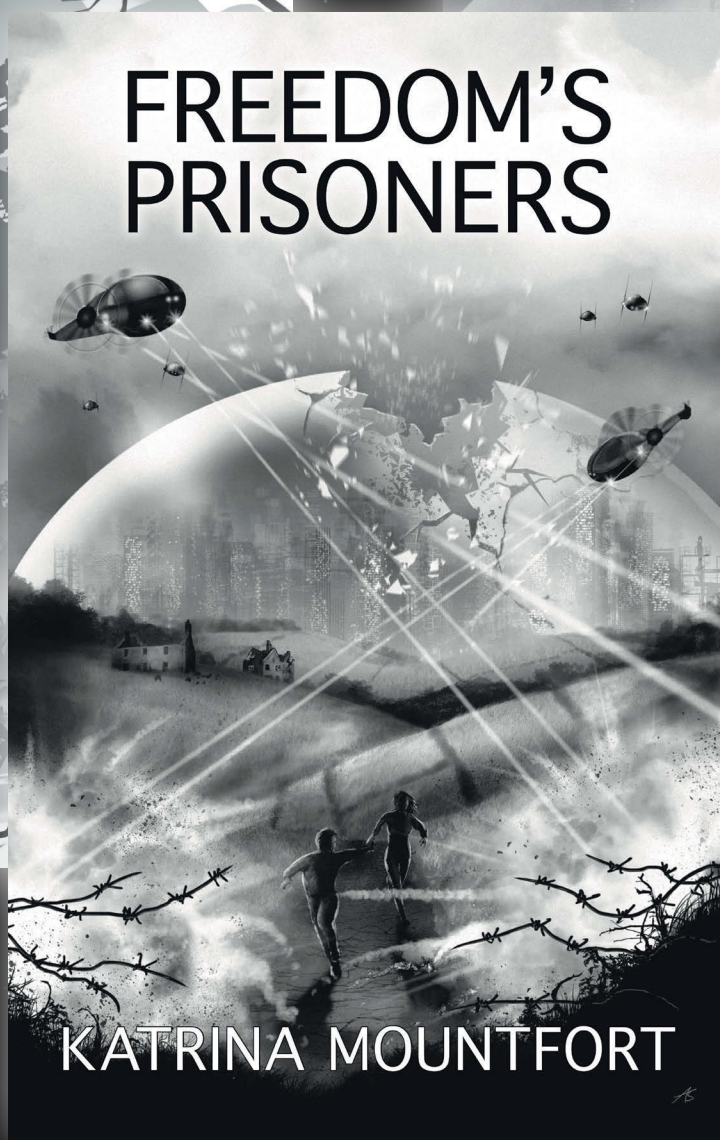
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DON'T MISS



[THE BIG ONE]

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story

// PREMIERE DATE, 16 DECEMBER // STUDIO, WALT DISNEY/LUCASFILM // DIRECTOR, GARETH EDWARDS
// STARRING, FELICITY JONES, DIEGO LUNA, BEN MENDELSON

It's that time of the year again. As we approach the festive period it must mean another Star Wars movie is almost upon us, this one being the first of a series of standalone stories set in the Star Wars universe, not connected to the new trilogy that began with *The Force Awakens* last December. *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* looks set to smash box office records despite the fact the suits at Disney have said they don't expect it to match the same numbers as J.J. Abrams' cash-grabbing behemoth. Sure, it's a gamble on behalf of the studio, but come on – this is Star Wars, kids.

While most of the main characters in the film will have their faces clearly seen when the flick hits screens 16 December, there's one cast member we won't be ogling – Alan Tudyk. The *Serenity* actor plays the droid K-2SO, who director Gareth Edwards has described as the antithesis of C-3PO with a dash of Chewbacca's personality thrown in for good measure.

However, it turns out the Tudyk almost had the opportunity to make a sneaky appearance in the film not as himself, but as a character from his own web series, *Con Man*. For those of you not in the know, Tudyk stars as Wray Nerely in the series, a struggling actor typecast in boring sci-fi roles, who is very much based on the actor's own experiences while trying to eek out an existence in Hollywood. Unfortunately for Tudyk, the character's cameo was chopped from the final cut of the movie, but we're holding out hope that he might make an appearance on the blu-ray's special features when the disc ships in 2017.

"I played a pilot, but the scene got cut. I was really looking forward to seeing Wray Nerely in Star Wars, but truthfully Wray Nerely would never get that good of a job, so it was probably pretty good that he didn't [appear]," says the actor.

IT'S JUST A MATTER OF A FEW WEEKS BEFORE WE'LL FIND OUT WHETHER DISNEY'S GAMBLE WITH THE FOUR BILLION DOLLAR LICENSE HAS PAID OFF

Still, Tudyk can console himself with the fact that he still managed to perform motion capture and voice a kick-ass droid in one of the most anticipated Star Wars films of all time, an experience he says he relished from start to finish, despite ruffling the features of fellow Star Wars actor Anthony Daniels.

"I met Anthony Daniels at Star Wars Celebration Europe, who has worn an actual suit as C-3PO since the first Star Wars. He had to be screwed into it. To get out of it, it took a drill and some time. He was in the desert, as you know, and put up with a lot of harsh conditions," says Tudyk. "He asked me what I wore on the shoot and I said, 'I'm motion capturing it.' He said, 'You f... (edited that word – Ed)!' First world problems aside, it's just a matter of a few weeks before we'll find out whether Disney's gamble with the four billion dollar license has paid off, but if early word is to be believed it appears *The Force* is strong with this one too, and the Mouse House has yet another monster Star Wars hit on its hands. You won't be able to move in our house come Boxing Day for *Rogue One* toy boxes! **GM**

Prebook your tickets now – *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* will be in cinemas from 16 December from Walt Disney.



OUT THIS MONTH // MOVIES



MOANA



SULLY

'Tis the season to eat popcorn...

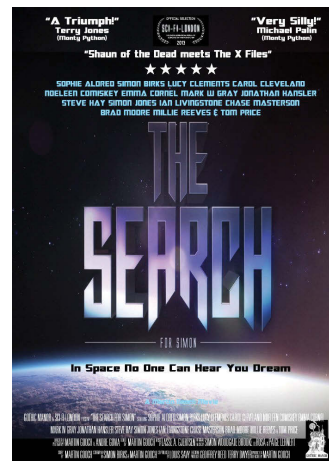
Of course the big geeky movie of the moment is *Rogue One*, but as we've covered that already, let's see what else will be tempting you out this festive season. Just as winter sets in and we get wrapped up warm, Disney wants to take us to the mystic island of Polynesia with glistening blue seas, sunshine and Maui the legendary demigod. *Moana* is Disney's 56th animated feature film, pub quiz fans will know that the first was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, and the titular star of the flick is the young princess of her Motunui Island tribe. Also lending their voices to what is undoubtedly going to be a Christmas blockbuster are Dwayne Johnson and Nicole Scherzinger.

Like your movies less Happy Meal? Well Clint Eastwood has directed Tom Hanks in a movie adaptation of Captain Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger's autobiography *Highest Duty*. This is the story of how, on 15 January 2019, Captain Sully and First Officer Jeffrey Skiles were faced with a difficult decision. They were flying their US Airways flight 1549 plane from LaGuardia Airport when at 2,800 feet they hit a flock of Canada geese. The birds completely destroyed both engines, their altitude was not very high, and it was clear to the pilots that they would not make it to any airports for an emergency landing. Sully took the decision to ditch the aircraft on the Hudson River in New York. Miraculously he managed to land the plane intact, saving the lives of all those on board.

Enter the villain of the piece, the National Transportation Safety Board, who try to claim that Sully could have saved the plane if he had headed for an airport, that the left engine was not destroyed and he had enough power. The movie shows the court case where the NTSB try to discredit Sully using flight simulators. We won't spoil the ending, let's just say it's a triumph on heroism over faceless government bodies! Captain Sully, we salute you. The movie opens on 2 December. **GM**

STILL SEARCHING...

It's "Shaun of the Dead meets The X-Files," said someone on the poster. "Very silly!" said Michael Palin. Well it must be good then! An independent sci-fi meets comedy film starring friend of Geeky Monkey, and Doctor Who companion, Sophie Aldred, *The Search For Simon* is getting a showing at The Courthouse Hotel in London on 30 November. It has been out on DVD before, but we heartily recommend the big screen experience. Let's find Simon!



25 November

- ★ **Allied**
// PARAMOUNT PICTURES
- ★ **Bad Santa 2**
// ENTERTAINMENT ONE
- ★ **Creepy**
// EUREKA ENTERTAINMENT

30 November

- ★ **The Search for Simon**
// FILM VOLT

2 December

- ★ **Moana**
// WALT DISNEY
- ★ **Sully**
// WARNER BROS

9 December

- ★ **I Am Not A Serial Killer**
// BULLDOG FILM
- ★ **Office Christmas Party**
// ENTERTAINMENT ONE

16 December

- ★ **Rogue One: A Star Wars Story**
// WALT DISNEY



Back to the New World Order

Have you seen *The Man In The High Castle* yet? If not, then stop reading and get yourself to Amazon Prime Video and start streaming this rather excellent show based on the book by seminal sci-fi author, Philip K. Dick that drops us into an alternate world where the Nazis and Japanese armed forces won the second World War. It's one of the more intriguing and cerebral shows out there right now and the first season is quite the cracker.

If, like us, you've already gobbled up the first run then you'll be happy to know that the show is returning to small screens just in time for the festive season and with it, one of its best characters – Rufus Sewell's John Smith, a villainous Nazi officer with a killer knack for hunting down members of an underground revolution daring to oppose the powers that be. Sewell's been involved with the series from the get-go, and like everyone else working with the fledgling studio right now, he claims the experience shooting both seasons has been nothing short of spectacular and so far removed from world of cable TV where ratings are king and creativity comes second.

"They basically – and [show creator] Frank Spotnitz talks very well about this – left us the fuck alone. They had notes, I'm sure, but as Frank said, they seemed to be keeping them to themselves. They weren't worried about ratings – although I'm sure they are a bit more than they say – but they wanted it to be different," says Sewell. "They wanted it to be the kind of thing that no one else would dare touch. They wanted to make a

splash, which gives you confidence that if you do something out of the box and different that does not tick familiar boxes, then you're not going to be under pressure to kind of fit into the nearest cliché."

While we don't know too much about series two, we do know that Spotnitz has stepped down as showrunner, it'll deviate from the book (but use the source material as a spiritual guide, so to speak) and, more importantly, we'll finally get to meet *The Man In The High Castle* who was teased in the first trailer for the show's return. The rest, like many of the original shows produced by the streaming giants, remains a mystery until it launches on the 16 December. **GM**

VROOM, VROOM

Do you like fast cars, daft humour and the musings of Jeremy Clarkson? Well you're in for a treat with Amazon's *The Grand Tour*, which sees the hotheaded host, Richard Hammond and James May return to screens for more motoring madness after their run on *Top Gear* came to a halt in 2015.



Exclusive to the Prime video service, you will have to sign up to watch, but it'll be worth it.

Streaming

★ **Luke Cage, Season 1**

// NETFLIX

★ **Black Mirror, Season 3**

// NETFLIX

18 November

★ **The Grand Tour, Season 1**

// AMAZON PRIME

24 November

★ **American Dad!, Season 13**

// AMAZON PRIME

1 December

★ **Vikings, Season 4b**

// AMAZON PRIME

9 December

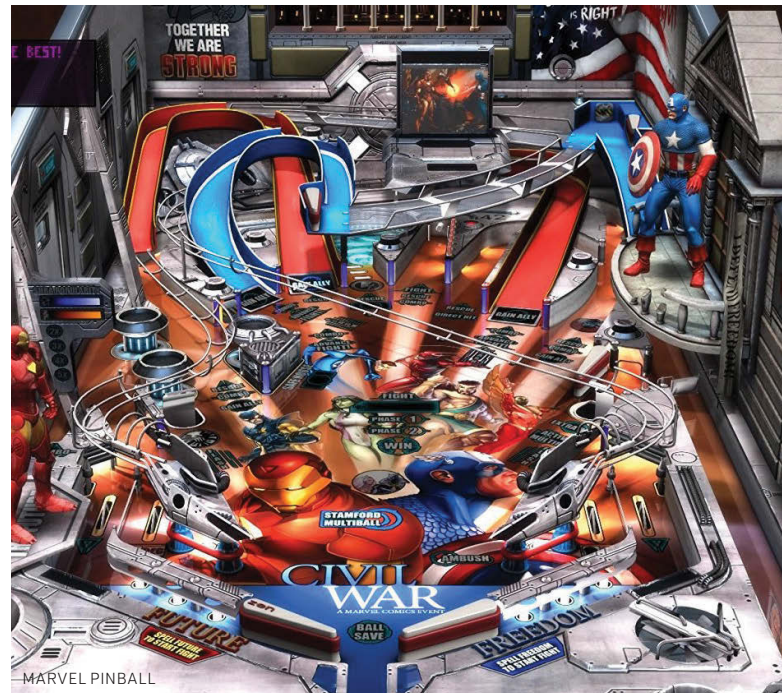
★ **White Rabbit Project, Season 1**

// NETFLIX

19 December

★ **The Man in the High Castle, Season 2**

// AMAZON PRIME



The Twilight Zone of gaming

By now you will have already decided which videogames you'll be wanting to see under the Christmas tree when the fat man has been. All the big guns were released last month, leaving us with the Twilight Zone of November where brave games peek out from under their rock, hoping that Call of Duty: Infinite War, Titanfall 2 and Battlefield 1 won't pop a cap in their ass. Are you going VR this year? Or would you rather a game of super hero pinball?

The big hitter out on 29 November is Square Enix's Final Fantasy XV, our flip cover game from issue 11. If you go for the Day One Edition you get the game along with a bonus downloadable Masamune sword to slice and dice your enemies with. And that's it. Slightly disappointing for a special edition, not even an extra jacket to wear? If you pre-order your copy from GAME you also get the retro A King's Tale game with super fast gameplay and a surprisingly deep combat system. Splash out a bit more cash and you can plumb for the Deluxe Edition that comes in a SteelBook case with the Kingsglaive movie on blu-ray, a Royal Raiment outfit, the Masamune sword again and a Platinum Leviathan recolour to play around with, plus some postcards if you pre-order. Still not Final Fantasy enough for you? Well if you're that much of a hardcore fan, and have £189.99 to spend, the Ultimate Collector's Edition is the mutt's nuts. Two SteelBook cases, blu-rays of the Kingsglaive movie plus Brotherhood anime series, soundtrack disc, 192 page Art of Final Fantasy XV book, a 26cm figure of Noctis that is unique to this edition plus a wide selection of weapons and items to download and keep. When did buying a game become so complicated? You can bet granny/mum and dad/your partner pick up the wrong version to wrap on the big day! **GM**

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CATCH 'EM ALL...

Oh my god they're back. It might be essentially the same game as GameFreak created in 1996, but Nintendo just won't let it lie. Have another double helping of Pokémon this November, and feel the injustice of having to buy both to see every new Pokémon!



18 November

★ **Killing Floor 2**
// PS4

22 November

★ **Darksiders: Warmastered Edition**
// PS4, XB1, WiiU

23 November

★ **Pokémon Sun & Moon**
// 3DS

25 November

★ **Marvel Pinball**
// PS4, XB1

29 November

★ **Final Fantasy XV**
// PS4, XB1

2 December

★ **Syberia 3**
// PS4, XB1, PC

9 December

★ **The Last Guardian**
// PS4

A promotional poster for the video game Mafia III. The background features a large, close-up portrait of the main character, Vincent, looking intensely at the viewer. To his left, smaller portraits of other characters are visible. On the right, a hand holds a large, detailed handgun. In the center, three men in suits and hats stand in a street. At the bottom, a man in a suit is seen from behind, reaching out towards a classic blue car with its headlights on in a city street at night.

FAMILY IS WHO YOU **DIE FOR** MAFIA **III**

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THE 12 DAYS OF DOCTOR WHO CHRISTMAS

THE ANNUAL DOCTOR WHO CHRISTMAS SPECIAL IS A TRADITION AS WELL ESTABLISHED AS EATING AND DRINKING EXCESSIVELY AND FORGETTING TO WATCH THE QUEEN'S SPEECH. WE REWATCH THE HIGHS AND LOWS AMONGST THE TARDIS'S 12 FESTIVE OUTINGS SO FAR...

Words: CHRIS HALLAM
Knows a lot about science fiction.





Let's face it. Christmas and science fiction have often made uneasy bedfellows. Sci-fi is often set in the future which, for whatever reason, is usually envisaged as being sterile, godless and secular. Extra-terrestrials are also usually assumed not to follow Earth religion. Funny that. Christmas is, amongst other things, all about tradition and family: science fiction is usually about anything but. Thus there are no snowball fights in Frank Herbert's *Dune*. No Christmas crackers are pulled on the *Nostromo*. And there were no Doctor Who Christmas specials during the first 26 years of Doctor Who's existence.

With one exception...

The Feast of Steven was broadcast on 25 December 1965, back in the era of the very first Doctor Who, William Hartnell. It was not a normal Christmas special. The series was midway through its normal run; indeed, it was fully embroiled in a heavy storyline involving the ever popular Daleks. As the weekly episode happened to fall on the big day, a lighter one-off story was created. The punning title ('Feast of Steven' as opposed to the traditional 'Feast of Stephen') centring on the Doctor's male companion Steven (played by future Blue Peter presenter Peter Purves). Probably the most memorable thing about the episode, which no longer physically exists, is its ending. Hartnell's Doctor broke the fourth wall, turned and wished a Merry Christmas to everyone "at home."

How did he do that? Is the Doctor secretly aware that his actions are being watched all the time? Perhaps we shouldn't worry about it. At any rate, the next Doctor Who to be screened on Christmas Day would be broadcast a full 40 years later.



THE CHRISTMAS INVASION

TENTH DOCTOR // 2005 // WRITER, RUSSELL T DAVIES

With the world imperilled first by killer Santa robots, then by an alien race the Synchorax who abduct the British Prime Minister (played by Penelope Wilton), a third of the world's population are sent into a hypnotic state. This Christmas special should have given David Tennant countless opportunities to demonstrate his credentials as the new Doctor. Instead creator Russell T Davies chose to render the Doctor unconscious for much of the episode while companion Rose and boyfriend Mickey (Billie Piper and Noel Clarke) faff around on their own.

Surprisingly, keeping the new Doctor as a special gift to viewers turns out to be a brilliant move, as Tennant's Doctor Who, when he does wake up, proves an immediate success: charismatic, funny and convincing. He even memorably re-grows his own hand after temporarily losing it in combat, while deftly precipitating the downfall of the morally dubious Prime Minister by carefully deploying the six fateful words, "Don't you think she looks tired?" Any lingering doubts about the selection of a man then best known for playing Casanova to succeed Christopher Ecclestone as the Doctor (who had quit after one series), were vanquished just as assuredly as Tennant's Doctor ultimately vanquishes the Synchorax.

The episode remains a firm favourite amongst fans, an unusual thing in itself as Doctor Who fans generally don't agree with each other on anything.

Didn't you used to be married to that Chris Evans?: Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) deals with some unwanted halitosis alien fan attention.





THE RUNAWAY BRIDE

TENTH DOCTOR // 2006 // WRITER, RUSSELL T DAVIES

Although she did not become an official companion of the Doctor until 2008, this episode is dominated by the presence of Donna Noble (Catherine Tate, already famous as a comedy performer by this point). She bizarrely materialises on the TARDIS in full wedding regalia, soon after the Doctor's final emotionally overwrought departure from Rose. Donna's sudden transportation during her wedding ceremony turns out to be the result of her workplace, which is owned by the Torchwood Institute, having been taken over by the malevolent Empress of Racnoss (Sarah Parrish), a weird spider-like thingummy who has constructed a big tunnel under the Thames Barrier.



VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED

TENTH DOCTOR // 2007 // WRITER, RUSSELL T DAVIES

Say what you like about us Brits, but never let it be said that we don't love Kylie Minogue to bits. Kylie alone would justify the nation of Australia's existence for many of us. As a people, we love the former Neighbours star more than life itself. Well, maybe not that appearance in Street Fighter: The Movie.

The evidence? Well, this episode of Doctor Who, that featured a much hyped performance by the Moulin Rouge fairy as waitress Astrid, got more viewers than any other Doctor Who Christmas special on this list (check out: Who Watches Who?). Indeed, it is the highest rated Doctor Who episode since the series returned in 2005. In fact, aside from a Tom Baker era episode screened during a strike which shut down ITV briefly in 1979, this received the highest ratings of any Doctor Who episode ever made.

Some of you may be objecting here that there were other factors aside from the casting of the soap actress which might explain the episode's popularity. And you would be right: it is a good one anyway. The Doctor finds himself on-board an interstellar cruiser where he meets and chats up waitress Astrid (played by the aforementioned one-time star of The Delinquents, Kylie Minogue).

The spaceship has been named after the famously unlucky passenger ship the Titanic, which sailed across some of the Atlantic in 1912. Unfortunately, while there are no icebergs in space, the ship soon finds itself plummeting towards London, specifically Buckingham Palace, after it is sabotaged by its Captain (series veteran Geoffrey Palmer). Astrid and the Doctor try to save the day but are impeded by a host of android angels.

A good episode in itself, then but I am sure Kylie's celebrity status boosted the ratings. Will Doctor Who ever get so many viewers again? As Kylie herself might say, we should be so lucky.



THE NEXT DOCTOR

TENTH DOCTOR // 2008 // WRITER, RUSSELL T DAVIES

It often seems as if Doctor Who Christmas Specials are always set in Victorian times. This isn't actually true (although the era is certainly a popular recurrent setting for the series generally) and, in fact, this one set in 1851 has an intriguing premise. For in this story Tennant's Doctor encounters a Victorian man (David Morrissey) who is known as and calls himself 'The Doctor' and behaves in a similarly heroic fashion. As the episode was advertised in 2008, some speculated that Morrissey (who had acted opposite Tennant in 2005's Dennis Potter-style series *Blackpool*, and who has since been in *The Walking Dead* as The Governor) was being groomed as a replacement Doctor. This never seems to have been on the cards. In the episode, Tennant's Doctor speculates that Morrissey's character, who seems friendly enough, is a future version of himself who appears to have lost his memory.

The actual explanation turns out to be rather more complex even than that and at any rate, the duo are soon distracted by all manner of somewhat more pressing Cyberman-related concerns, concerns that grow especially acute when nasty Miss Hartigan (Dervla Kirwan) is converted into a gargantuan Cyberking. "My people... why aren't they rejoicing?" the deluded cyborgs asks. Perhaps it's because she is stomping over everyone who gets in her way.



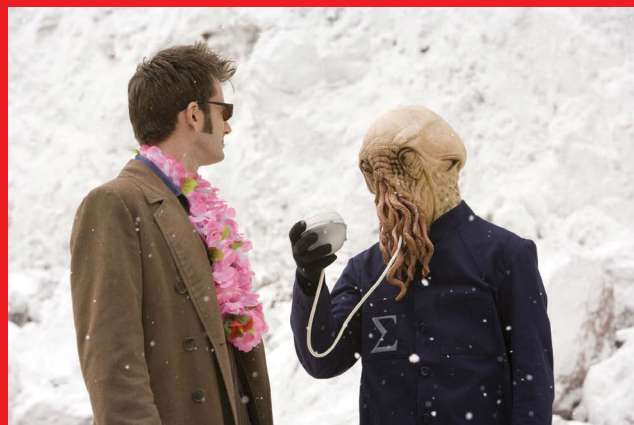
THE END OF TIME

TENTH & ELEVENTH DOCTOR // 2009/2010 // WRITER, RUSSELL T DAVIES

Something of a turning point, this two-parter (the second episode was screened one week after the Christmas day edition, on New Year's Day 2010), this saw both David Tennant's metamorphosis into Matt Smith's young Doctor and was also Russell T Davies' last spell of writing on the show. All subsequent Christmas specials have been written by Steven Moffat.

With Tennant by this point level pegging with Tom Baker for the title of most popular Doctor Who ever, the Tenth Doctor is given a somewhat epic send-off, effectively battling two foes – the familiar adversary The Master (John Simm) and Master of Rasilon (former James Bond, Timothy Dalton). The episodes also featured a number of cameos from familiar faces from the series' recent past such as Billie Piper, John Barrowman and Freema Agyeman, amongst many others.

For all that, as the ratings for part two of *The End Of Time* were higher than those for part one, it seems likely many viewers couldn't have known fully what was going on and had switched on just to see David Tennant's regeneration into Matt Smith.





A CHRISTMAS CAROL

ELEVENTH DOCTOR // 2010 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

With Michael Gambon playing wealthy miser Kazran Sardick (Ebenezer Scrooge in all but name), the Doctor intervenes to remind the old skinflint of his past and learn the error of his ways after he refuses to let an endangered space cruise liner (which happens to contain a honeymooning Amy and Rory) land safely. Featuring sharks and singer Katherine Jenkins in a state of cryogenic submersion, this is either a thought provoking and emotionally powerful episode or a loads of gushing, sentimental drivell depending on how Christmassy you're feeling.

Dreaming of a white Christmas?: Matt Smith's Doctor hopes his present turns out to be bigger on the inside.

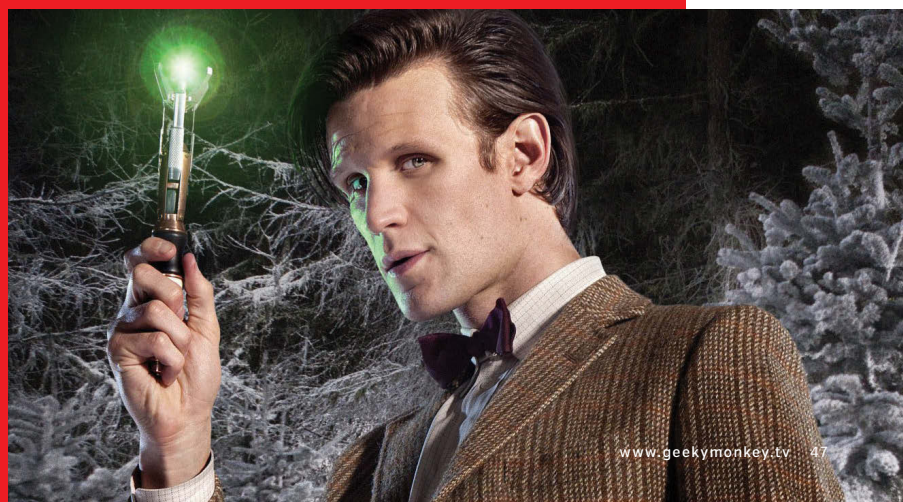


THE DOCTOR, THE WIDOW AND THE WARDROBE

ELEVENTH DOCTOR // 2011 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

Perhaps a more intentionally Christmassy Christmas special than usual and featuring cameos from comedy stars Bill Bailey and Arabella Weir, this sees Matt Smith's Doctor assisting a 1940's mother (Outnumbered star Claire Skinner) and her family, after the family's father, an RAF pilot (Alexander Armstrong), is reported missing in action in the Second World War. This is partly as repayment for an earlier favour when the family saved the Doctor after he thwarted an alien attack.

It must be said, many of the problems for the characters here, result from the Doctor's own carelessness, with the children getting sucked into a time portal with (sort of) Narnia-like consequences. This episode has tended to divide audiences, perhaps because it is too overtly Christmassy for many fans, but the whole thing undeniably has an enchanting feel to it.





THE SNOWMEN

ELEVENTH DOCTOR // 2012 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

It was only a matter of time before the concept of killer living snowman was introduced as a Doctor Who Christmas Special. In this instance it is in Victorian London, through a dubious Doctor Simeon (onetime possible Doctor Who Richard E Grant), acting under the auspices of a force known as the Great Intelligence (voiced by Sir Ian McKellen), that the snowmen come to life. In fact, it's a very decent episode, most significant in the long run for the return of Jenna Coleman as embattled governess Clara Oswald. She plays a character it is fair to say goes on to have a complex role in Doctor Who, but who in this short run finds as role replacing Amy and Rory as the Doctor's new companion.



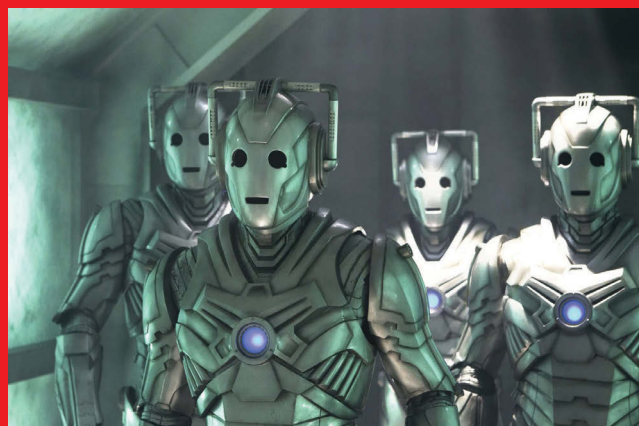
THE TIME OF THE DOCTOR

ELEVENTH & TWELFTH DOCTOR // 2013 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

Regenerations are always good for a laugh. They also seem to have become something of a festive tradition for Doctor Who in recent years, with three out of eleven Christmas specials featuring a brand spanking new Doctor.

2013 saw a significant reversal of the general trend for actors playing the Doctor to get gradually younger over time. Whereas the white haired Doctors of the Sixties became the middle aged Doctors of the Eighties to the relatively young Doctors of recent years, the change from Matt Smith to Peter Capaldi saw a shift from the youngest Doctor ever to the oldest. It is indeed only the third time in Doctor Who history that the Doctor has regenerated into an older man. The other times? Well, Colin Baker was older than Peter Davison when he replaced him. Jon Pertwee was older than his predecessor Patrick Troughton too, though in fact there was less than a year in it.

But enough age fun. This is actually an impressively ambitious episode typing up many of the themes which had bubbled away throughout Matt Smith's tenure as the Doctor. It also features a possibly career best performance from Smith, the planet Trenzalore, Weeping Angels, battling Daleks and a hallucinatory appearance by Amy Pond. What more could anyone want?





LAST CHRISTMAS

TWELFTH DOCTOR // 2014 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

Don't be fooled by Nick Frost's appearance as a typically jovial Santa. As the double-edged title indicates this is a cleverer, darker and more complex affair than your average Christmas special. It is certainly scarier. The plot hinges on the existence of Dream Crabs, a sinister creation which induces a dream-like state in the victim while feasting on their brains. The Doctor and Clara soon find themselves in the throes of a hideous dilemma. How can they know for sure what is real and what is a dream?



THE HUSBANDS OF RIVER SONG

ELEVENTH DOCTOR // 2011 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

Many characters and storylines have proven controversial during the Doctor's 53 year (or more accurately 37 year – there was a gap) stint on the box. But few individuals have proven more contentious than that of the Doctor's old flame River Song (Alex Kingston)

From the outset, the character has divided Doctor Who fans, so it was little surprise that last year's Christmas special, widely touted as her final appearance, proved no different. Throughout her seven years on the show, Kingston's somewhat theatrical performances have appealed to and alienated viewers in turn. Some have even suggested that her casting was a naked attempt to appeal to Doctor Who's growing US fan base (for though English herself, Kingston is reasonably familiar to American TV audiences thanks to her seven years playing British Dr Elizabeth Corday on the long running medical series ER).

Happily, River Song's swan song is given a new dimension simply by the fact that this time, for once, she is so much closer to The Doctor in age, now that Peter Capaldi has taken over. As well as by the fact that she doesn't actually know who he is.

In short, while on a routine visit to a remote Earth colony in the far future, the Doctor is mistaken for a surgeon who has been hired to remove the most valuable diamond in the universe – the Halassi Androvar – which has become lodged inside the brain of the cyborg King Hydroflax. An odd situation certainly. And the Doctor is further distracted by the fact that the King's wife is clearly his old flame River Song. And that she appears not to recognise him. With appearances by Matt Lucas as royal servant Nardole and Greg Davies as Hydroflax upping the comedy quotient, however, this amounts to wonderful festive fun.

WHO'S WATCHING WHO?

A QUICK GUIDE TO WHICH DOCTOR WHO CHRISTMAS SPECIALS GOT THE BEST AND WORST RATINGS...



1 // **VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED** [2007]
Doctor: **David Tennant**
Summary: **The Kylie Minogue Titanic one**
No. of viewers: **13.31 million**



2 // **THE NEXT DOCTOR** [2008]
Doctor: **David Tennant**
Summary: **The Victorian 'two Doctors' one**
No. of viewers: **13.10 million**



3 // **THE END OF TIME** [2009/2010]
Doctor: **David Tennant & Matt Smith**
Summary: **The Tennant/Smith regeneration**
No. of viewers: **12.4 million/12.7 million**



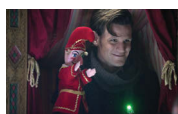
3 // **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** [2010]
Doctor: **Matt Smith**
Summary: **The Katherine Jenkins one**
No. of viewers: **12.11 million**



5 // **THE TIME OF THE DOCTOR** [2013]
Doctor: **Matt Smith/Peter Capaldi**
Summary: **The Smith/Capaldi regeneration**
No. of viewers: **11.14 million**



6 // **THE DOCTOR, THE WIDOW AND THE WARDROBE** [2011]
Doctor: **Matt Smith**
Summary: **All this and World War II**
No. of viewers: **10.77 million**



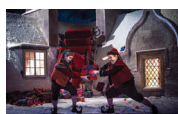
7 // **THE SNOWMEN** [2012]
Doctor: **Matt Smith**
Summary: **Evil Victorian snowmen with Clara**
No. of viewers: **9.87 million**



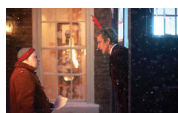
8 // **THE CHRISTMAS INVASION** [2005]
Doctor: **David Tennant**
Summary: **Tennant's first episode**
No. of viewers: **9.84 million**



9 // **THE RUNAWAY BRIDE** [2006]
Doctor: **David Tennant**
Summary: **Here comes Catherine Tate**
No. of viewers: **9.35 million**



10 // **LAST CHRISTMAS** [2014]
Doctor: **Peter Capaldi**
Summary: **Father Christmas is Nick Frost**
No. of viewers: **8.28 million**



11 // **THE HUSBANDS OF RIVER SONG** [2015]
Doctor: **Peter Capaldi**
Summary: **Last year's headless one**
No. of viewers: **7.69 million**



THE RETURN OF DOCTOR MYSTERIO

TWELFTH DOCTOR // 2016 // WRITER, STEVEN MOFFAT

The concept of the super hero is set to receive a long overdue tweak on the nose as this year's Christmas special will see the Doctor joined by super hero Captain Mysterio. And, no, despite the episode's title, as far as we know the "returning" Captain has not ever appeared anywhere else before.

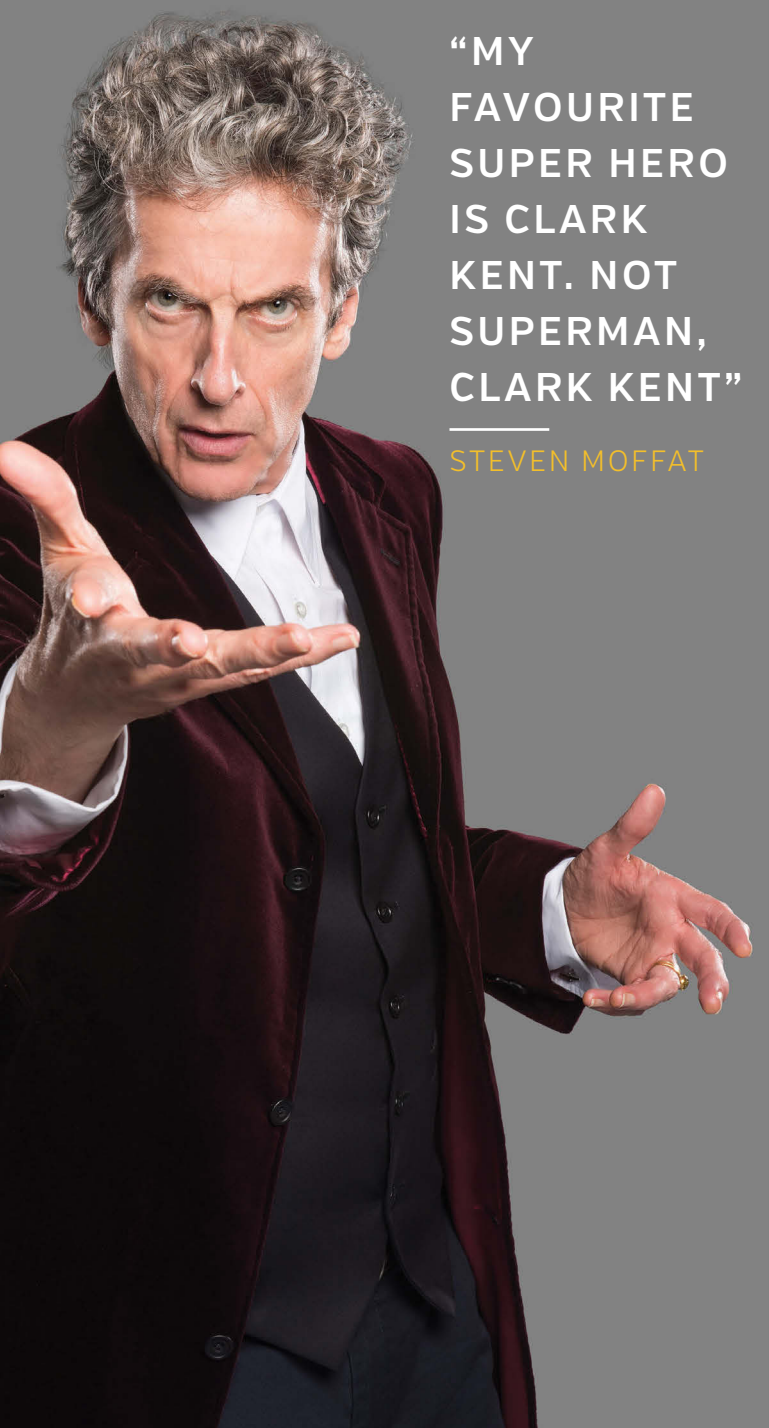
It already sounds fun, but with details sketchy there still remains quite a lot which is "mysterio" about the episode. However, we do know that Matt Lucas is reprising his role as Nardole from last year's Christmas special. Charity Wakefield, best known for her role in the recent series *The Player* and for playing Mary Boleyn in *Wolf Hall* is playing an investigative reporter. She, along with the Doctor and Captain Mysterio, will be fighting to defend the world from some as yet unspecified alien threat.

But who plays the Captain himself? He is played by Bruce Chatwin. A prolific American actor, Chatwin has cropped up in everything from TV cult favourite *Lost* to Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*, but is best known for the role of Jimmy Lishman in the long running US version of the Channel 4 show *Shameless* and for his TV roles as Jason Kellerman in *Orphan Black* and Cameron Hawthorne in *American Gothic*.

"Working with the amazing people at Doctor Who has been one of the most fun and rewarding projects I've ever had the pleasure of being involved with," he says.

Writer Steven Moffat is giving little away either. "I've always loved super heroes and this Christmas Doctor Who dives into that world. My favourite super hero is Clark Kent. Not Superman, Clark Kent," he reflects mysteriously.

What's less in doubt is that if past evidence is anything to go by, for many people this year's Doctor Who will be unmissable Christmas Day viewing.



“MY
FAVOURITE
SUPER HERO
IS CLARK
KENT. NOT
SUPERMAN,
CLARK KENT”

STEVEN MOFFAT



Christmas is a confusing time. Both viewers and reviewers will be inclined to watch Christmas shows through the sentimental cherry-fuelled haze of the festive atmosphere. Writers may get away with storylines which look less robust when re-evaluated under the less merciful spotlight of post-Christmas scrutiny. But the fact is all the above episodes were designed to be watched on Christmas Day. All were also generally well-reviewed at time of broadcast and all received higher ratings than normal Doctor Who episodes generally get. Even the lowest rated special here, The Husbands of River Song got higher ratings than almost any Doctor Who episode since Peter Capaldi took over as the Doctor back in 2013.

In other words, relax, sit back and enjoy this year's Doctor Who Christmas Special. And as William Hartnell would have said, “Incidentally, a happy Christmas to all of you at home.” **GM**

SWORD ART ONLINE

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-Hollow Realization-

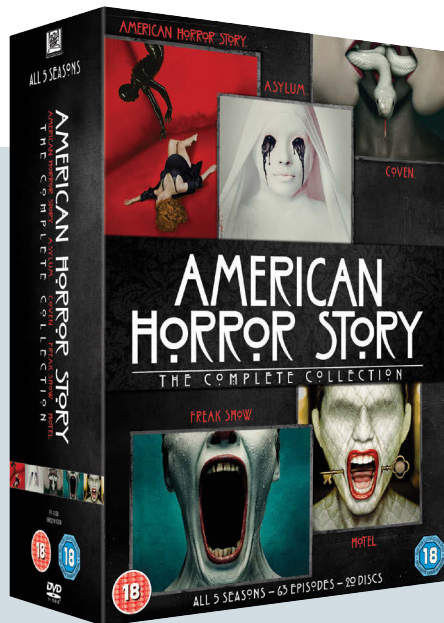


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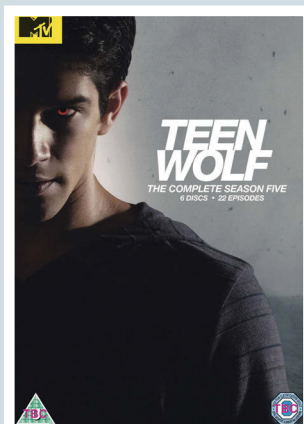
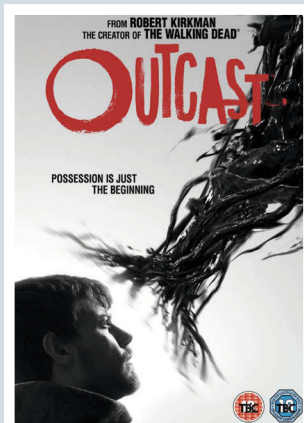
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WIN! A DVD CHRISTMAS HAMPER FROM TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

COMPETITION TIME!



TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT HAS GOT GEEKY DVD BOX SETS THAT WILL MAKE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFTS, AND THEY'VE GIVEN GEEKY MONKEY A BIG HAMPER OF NEW RELEASES TO GIVE AWAY

There's an eclectic mix of geeky goodness in this DVD hamper, and we're giving the lot away to one lucky Geeky Monkey reader. We have Outcast Season 1, Vikings Season 4, Sons of Anarchy The Complete Seasons 1-5, American Horror Story Seasons 1-5, Ash Vs Evil Dead Season 1 and Teen Wolf Season 5. That should keep you busy until at least Boxing Day.

All you've got to do to win our Twentieth Century Fox DVD box set hamper is visit Geeky Monkey on Facebook or Twitter and answer the super-tricky question...

A. Facebook: Visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/geekymonkeymag](https://www.facebook.com/geekymonkeymag) then Like, Share and Comment on the competition post before emailing us the answer.

OR

B. Twitter: Go to twitter.com/thegeekymonkey, Like and Retweet the competition Tweet then answer the question.

We'll select the winners at random on 22 December.

TERMS & CONDITIONS: This competition is open to readers of Geeky Monkey residing in the UK and Ireland. Employees of Uncooked Media Ltd and their families are not eligible to enter. The competition closes at 23:59 on 21 December, entries received after that time will not be counted. Winners will be selected at random on 22 December and contacted via email. Prizes will be delivered to mainland UK and Ireland addresses only, and Uncooked Media Ltd reserves the right to withdraw one or all prizes without notification. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

DIE HARD

// 1988

directed by

JOHN MCTIERNAN

starring

JOHN MCCLANE // **BRUCE WILLIS**


HANS GRUBER // **ALAN RICKMAN**

HOLLY GENNARO-MCCLANE // **BONNIE BEDELIA**

Christmas is just around the corner and it's that time of year when we want to open a bag of popcorn and watch a classic Christmas movie. Home Alone? Nope. Scrooged? Maybe. But no, it's always Die Hard for us. A movie that was meant to be an all-action terrorist flick, but somehow entered geek legend as the number one Christmas movie, appearing on novelty Christmas jumpers every year.

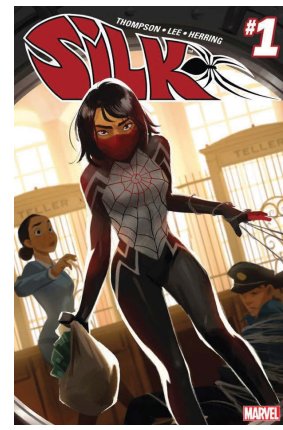
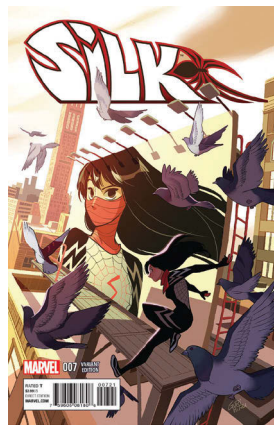
Before taking on the role of John McClane Bruce Willis was known as a comedy actor on TV, this is the movie that broke him into the big time in Hollywood, but he was not the first choice of Fox for the part. The movie is based on the novel Nothing Lasts Forever by Roderick Thorp, the sequel to The Detective, which was made into a movie starring Frank Sinatra. Because of a quirk in the contracts, Sinatra had to be offered the part of John McClane first. Luckily he turned it down. Fox then tried Arnold Schwarzenegger, but he didn't fancy it either. Finally Bruce Willis got the part, and we couldn't imagine anyone making a better job of it.

Set on Christmas Eve with an office party going on while Willis strips down to his vest and shoots terrorists, this is the perfect movie to watch to get you in the mood for those long supermarket queues and screaming kids.



"GLASS, WHO GIVES A SHIT
ABOUT GLASS?"

JOHN MCCLANE

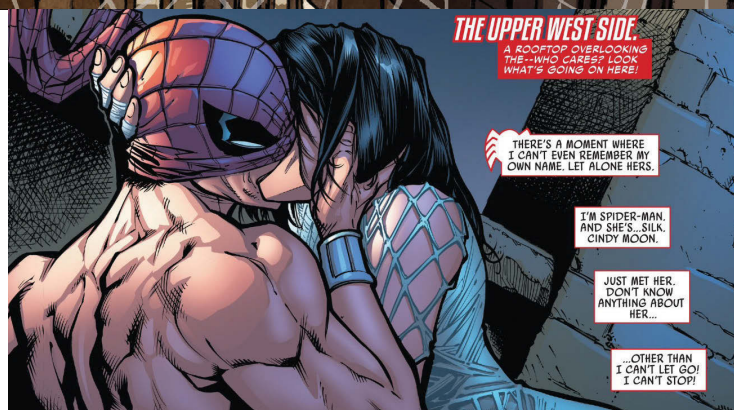


BRIDE OF THE SPIDER

REAL NAME CINDY MOON // **FIRST APPEARANCE** THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #1 (APRIL 2014)



For a character that only came into being in April 2014, Silk has been incredibly busy. Let's hope we see a lot more of her, Spider-Man certainly hopes so.





SILK

URNS OUT THAT RADIOACTIVE SPIDER THAT BIT PETER PARKER BIT ANOTHER STUDENT – CINDY MOON, AKA SILK!

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Hyper-Spider Speed and Spider-Sense, organic webbing, superhuman strength (naturally) and a kick-ass costume for her to fight crime on the streets of New York in. Basically, she gives Spider-Man a run for his money.

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

If you're looking for a Silk fix then get yourself to your nearest comic book store and pick up a copy of the Silk solo series. It's a helluva ride, web slingers!

Silk is probably one of the most fresh-faced comic book characters we've featured here in our character profiles, having only been brought to life a mere two years ago by wunder-scribe Dan Slott and pencil pusher Humberto Ramos in issue three of *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

While she may have only appeared in a cameo role, she proved such a hit with fans of the series she was given her own comic book, much to the joy of Slott who surfaced on forums shortly after the announcement to thank fans for being so vocal about the character.

Her origin, for the most part, is the exact same as Peter Parker's; thirteen years prior to the events of her first appearance a radioactive spider bit Parker, turning him into Spider-Man, but what we didn't see until 2014 is that the spider took a chunk out of another student seconds later. That student was Cindy Moon. And much like Parker, her powers soon began to manifest at an accelerated rate, but unlike Peter, Cindy couldn't control them.

Enter Ezekiel Sim, a businessman with his own superhero past, who offers to take Cindy under his wing and train her to control her abilities. But after six years of gruelling preparation at the hands of Ezekiel, she's unceremoniously locked in a cage deep in a secret facility and permanently shut off from the outside world. It's likely that she would have rotted there for the rest of her days had Peter not experienced the energies of the Watcher's Eye, which revealed to him that the radioactive spider bit another person besides him right before it shuffled off to the big white webbing in the sky.

Naturally, he frees her from her prison, but unfortunately for her, life has moved on and her family home now houses a group of strangers. Since then she's spent her waking hours fighting crime and working at a TV station she uses as a means to try to track down her missing family. Oh, and despite a few tussles with Peter, the two actually hooked up because of their whacky Spider-Connection.

Where that relationship goes is anyone's guess, but she's had a rather excellent run in the Marvel Universe in such a short space of time, appearing in the Original Sin run, Spider-Verse and the Silk solo-series, which is already on its 13th issue, so it's safe to say we're going to be seeing a lot more of Cindy Moon and her alter ego as the Marvel-Verse continues to grow. **GM**

**“SO, I GUESS I’M BACK.
BACK IN THE PLACE WHERE I
WAS LOCKED AWAY FOR TEN
YEARS. THE PLACE WHERE I
LOST EVERYTHING.”**

SILK





COSPLAYER // AYASHA

Hello my name is Caroline from the Ayasha_ Cosplay page. I am a Canadian cosplayer based in Montreal, Quebec. I have been cosplaying since July 2016 so I am still new in this world. I am now learning how to craft my own accessories and costumes. I love reading books and comic books and that is how I started wanting to incarnate Marvel characters. My all-time favourite is Wolverine from the X-Men series.

LOVES CARS, CHOCOLATE, NATURE, SUSHI AND MOVIES

DISLIKES LIES, HUNTING AND HORROR MOVIES

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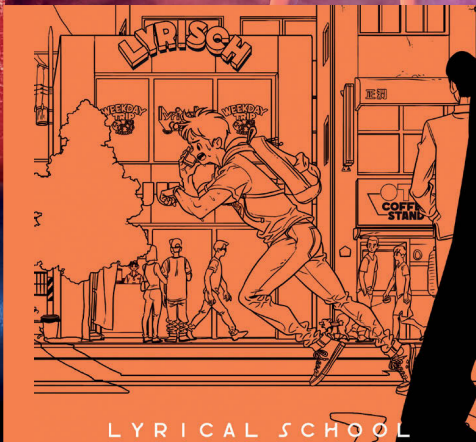
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GET THIS

OUT OF THIS WORLD GEEK GOODIES FOR YOUR HOME – THE PLACE WHERE THE WI-FI CONNECTS AUTOMATICALLY

LEGO Technic Heavy Lift Helicopter

£100 // LEGO.COM

LEGO has come a long way from making a multi-coloured brick house and being impressed because it had a working door. These days LEGO is movie merchandise, LEGO is intricate builds, LEGO is learning about mechanics with Technic. We just love this 2-in-1 Heavy Lift Helicopter that's new to the LEGO Technic range this year. It comes complete with special power functions that work the contra-rotating rotors, winch and cargo bay doors. There are two large engines to construct and once you've build the model, you can deconstruct it and start over – there are two models you can build with the same pieces. Great!



Circuit Board Keychain

\$29 [£23] // CIRCUITBREAKERLABS.COM

The clever people at Circuit Breaker Labs over in the States are putting old circuit boards to a good use by making jewellery, tie bars, cufflinks and keyrings that have pieces of circuit at their heart. We love what they're doing as every piece is unique, no two recycled circuit boards being the same, and it's a neat way of recycling old technology. Mounted in silver plate with a domed top, the keyring doubles as a necklace.



Star Trek Tabletop 50th Anniversary Ornament

\$75 [£60] // THINKGEEK.COM

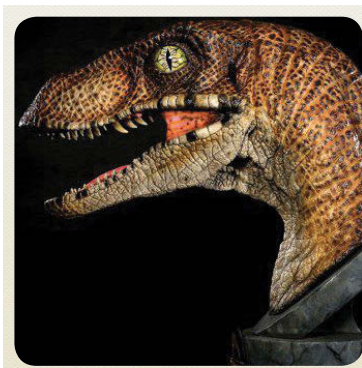
With Mr Spock, Captain Kirk and Dr McCoy in a line on the bridge of the Enterprise, this ornament is a must-have piece for anyone wanting to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Star Trek's original series. Excitedly there is a small button underneath Kirk's seat, one press and the ornament lights up and plays lines from the TV show. You just know that pressing that button will never get old.



Game of Thrones Goblets

£37 // THEFOWNDRY.COM

"What has happened to Geeky Monkey," we hear you cry, "glassware reviews?" Well yes, that's true, but these glass goblets are not any old glass goblets. Master glass maker Ed Burke made these especially for Game of Thrones, you will have seen Tyrion Lannister swigging away and giving his line, "I drink and I know things." Well you can now buy the exact same goblets for your own quaffing parties.



Jurassic Park Velociraptor 1/1 scale bust

£1,450 // COLLECTIBLESDIRECT.CO.UK

"Clever girl." The final words of Robert Muldoon, Jurassic Park's game warden in the 1993 Steven Spielberg movie as he realises he has been caught out by a Velociraptor. He had already discovered these vicious dinosaurs were systematically testing the fences in their enclosure at feeding time, it was only a matter of time before one of InGen's staff became lunch. This incredible 1:1 scale bust of the 'Clever Girl' raptor has been recreated from the actual cast at Stan Winston's creature studio. It's 30 inches tall and is a limited edition. A pricey piece for your geek cave at £1,450 each, but certainly a conversation starter at parties!



Star Wars Death Star Egg Timer

£19 // DISNEYSTORE.CO.UK

It's a war on hardboiled eggs – you need the Death Star on your side to ensure that you get to dip your toast soldiers into delicious runny yolk. Underground Toys has created this amazing Death Star egg timer with the Disney and Lucasfilm boffins. Give it a twist to set it to the time you require, then it will tick away and count down, rewarding you with a Superlaser sound and light show when the time is up.



Marvel Avengers Christmas Bauble Pack

£15 // YELLOWBULLDOG.CO.UK

Christmas is a coming, the goose is getting fat, time to hang some officially licensed baubles on the tree in your flat. There are lots of decorations starring your favourite super heroes filling the shops but we've picked out this six pack of Marvel's Avengers as they've got a different colour each, matching the super heroes' costumes. Hulk, Ant Man, Thor, Black Panther, Captain America and Iron Man make up the six.



Zelda Triforce Temple of Light

£25 // RED5.CO.UK

The Triforce – a sacred relic from the Legend of Zelda series and the ultimate source of light for any gamer geek's bedroom. These three golden sacred triangles were created by Din, the Goddess of Power, Nayru, the Goddess of Wisdom and Farore, the Goddess of Courage. Plug this in and your room will be filled with Hyrule crests as the light shines out from the pattern on the side. Nice.



BECAUSE JAPAN

Words: JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan is the author of *Anime: A History* and *Modern Japan: All That Matters*

A New Type of Bomb

A TRUE LANDMARK IN JAPANESE ANIMATION – KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S AKIRA



It always began on the day after tomorrow. In the original manga, in its translations, and even in the film itself, the opening sequence of “a new type of bomb” wrecking central Tokyo was assigned the date at which the audience was supposedly sitting down to watch it. And then it would leap ahead a generation. The kids have run wild on the streets. The government is secretly funding the terrorists. New religious cults have sprung to life. There are riots, and in a gang fight out in the old town a bunch of rude boy-racers accidentally run into an escaped guinea pig from a secret military project.

Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* came heavily loaded with local allusions which flew over the heads of many English-speaking fans. The very words “new type of bomb” recalled those of Emperor Hirohito in his infamous surrender speech from 1945. But *Akira*'s Japan was most strongly rooted in Otomo's youth, when the wide-eyed country boy came to the big city of Tokyo to earn his fortune. He found a city struggling to recover from the aftermath of an apocalyptic war yet still mired in scandals, war crime revelations and revolutionary fervour. A giant crater sits at the heart of Otomo's Tokyo, like the suppurating cesspool that forms the structuring absence of Akira Kurosawa's break-out movie *Drunken Angel* (1948). The children of Otomo's Japan have been transformed by the war's aftermath – brash, irresolute and feckless, cruising the city on motorbikes and spouting an unintelligible argot thick with ze's and zo's, two emphatic particles unknown outside Tokyo gangs. I fondly remember showing *Akira* to a Japanese class at Leeds University in 1991, and Dr Penny Francks sticking her head around the door, listening for a few moments, and observing: “I can't understand a word!”

The anti-hero Kaneda is all mouth and trousers, a street thug whose passing interest in revolution is soon deconstructed as merely an excuse to pick up girls. But it's he and his outlaw bikers who inadvertently stumble upon (in fact, crash into) a secret plot to restore pre-war weapons programmes and human experimentation – the *Akira* project that attempts to harness and release the creative energy of the universe. In Japanese, it is written with katakana, a



writing system that makes it sound like a foreign acronym – A.K.I.R.A. Behind the scenes, Akira was an awful albatross of a movie project, with spiralling budgets and on-screen experimentation that left its producers panicking about the likelihood of it ever earning its money back. But the result was an apprentice piece of enduring power – a post-holocaust sci-fi epic that featured discordant gamelan music and Noh-influenced chanting, a cartoon that featured biker gangs throwing hand grenades and arguing about the origin of the universe, an animation that featured naturalist afterimages from passing headlights, and realistically curling smoke from cigarettes. To put matters in perspective, in 1989, the Hugo Award shortlist for Best Dramatic Presentation included Willow, Big and Alien Nation, and the winner was Who Framed Roger Rabbit? For a substantial subset of avant-garde science fiction fandom, Akira was a harbinger of a radical new sub-genre. For an audience that luxuriated in the “Japanesquerie” of the cyberpunk movement, the arrival of science fiction from Japan itself had a markedly alien frisson.

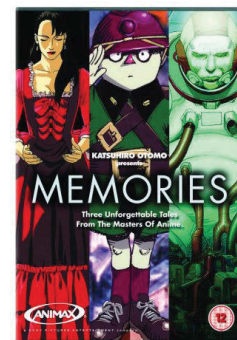
One of the unsung heroes in bringing Akira to the West was the curator and producer Carl Macek, who persuaded the Japanese to hand over all their art materials. An entire shipping container of cels and backgrounds, regarded by the film-makers as industrial waste, was sent to America, where Macek turned it into an asset. He framed iconic moments to sell as art, and headed off video pirates by offering a free piece of the original film to anyone who bought a legitimate copy.

As the film approaches its 30th anniversary in 2019, and the year in which both it and Blade Runner were set, it has become a standard bearer for Japanese animation. It may be difficult to remember in an age where Hayao Miyazaki dominates so much of the discourse of animation, but there was a time when Akira was the benchmark for everything that made anime cool. 28 years after its premiere, shined up for blu-ray, it's still pretty damn good-looking. **GM**

Akira is released on blu-ray 28 November by Manga Entertainment/Animatsu.



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JAPAN
 Journeys 



AFTER THE APOCALYPSE

Like Miyazaki, Katsuhiro Otomo found himself held up as a poster-boy for anime, despite conceiving much of his work in opposition to the mainstream. It was seven years before he followed Akira up with his anthology movie Memories (an early outing for his protégé Satoshi Kon) and his long gestating steampunk epic Steamboy did not appear until 2004. Even as it made his name internationally, Akira dominated his output, leaving him reluctant to discuss what came before it, and finding his later works overcast by its shadow. He has had a somewhat bitty career ever since, occasioned at least in part by the fact that he probably doesn't need to ever work again.

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WHILE THE BIG COMPANIES HAVE BEEN RESHUFFLING THEIR PROVERBIAL DECKS, QUIETLY EVERYONE ELSE HAS BUSIED THEMSELVES PUBLISHING WONDERFUL COMICS...

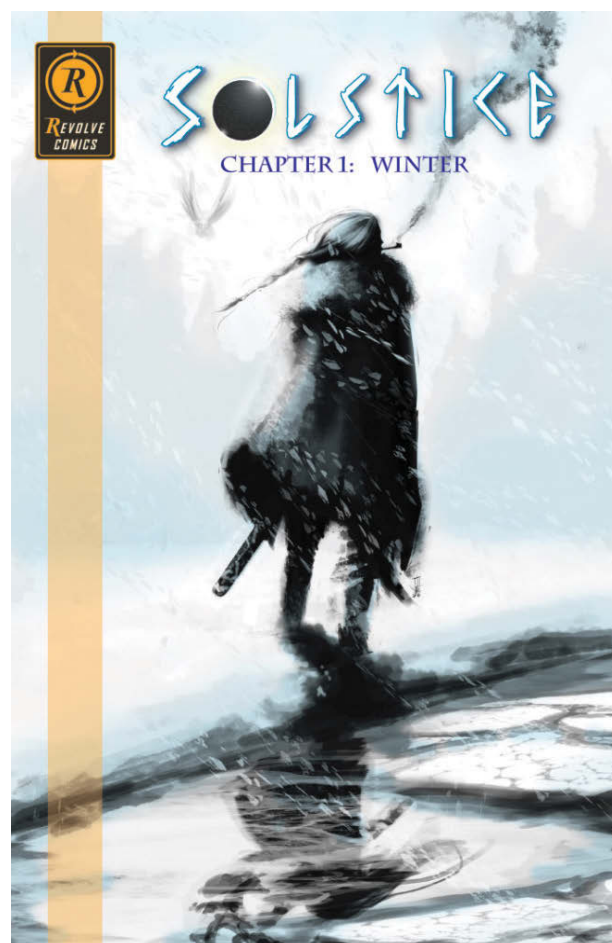
Words: MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Michael writes about wrestling, movies, and comics. His wife is going to kill him if she ever discovers the extent of his comic book addiction.

Titan Comics came to the fore this Autumn in grand fashion, thanks to a collaboration with notable publisher of noir fiction, Hard Case Crime. The launch of the line was bolstered by the addition of iconic film-maker, Walter Hill, bringing his distinct grit to the hard-boiled tales.

Already, Triggerman might be the jewel in the crown, co-written by Hill and Matz. It focuses on Roy Nash; a traditionally flawed crime lead. Under the direction of the mob, escaped convict Nash plunges into 'one last job'. So far, so ordinary, but this comic has a sumptuous period authenticity that instantly grips. It's an incredible looking piece of work too. Jef's artwork is deeply immersive, soaked in old-fashioned sweat and booze, and positively reeking from the tobacco constantly being smoked. To top things off, Titan decided to go with a plethora of variant covers for the first issues in the Hard Case line. The majority of them are stunning.

Image's Seven to Eternity arrived caked in pre-release hype that led to sell-outs and a swift trip back to the printers. We can happily report that the resulting funny book does actually live up to the hype, thanks to Rick Remender's ability to make a fantastical world appear immediately accessible. Jerome Pena's staggering artwork certainly calls to mind that of Marc Silvestri, bringing a huge amount of detail to several eye-opening creature designs, and various barren landscapes. Oh, and Matt Hollingsworth's colours are stupendous. This is an absolutely gorgeous title, which boasts a brilliantly realised environment and one that should become even more involving as it unfolds.



Cannibal is yet another high-concept horror comic from Image that presents readers with flesh eating, and a vintage southern Gothic vibe. In writers Brian Buccellato and Jennifer Young's scenario, the human consumption comes in the form of cannibalism triggered via a side-effect from a vaccination for Yellow Fever. Having those with the taste for human delicacies be conscious and aware of their cravings should provide the series a unique hook, as several plot elements could otherwise feel a little hackneyed. Matias Bergara's art has a loose, relaxed vibe that effortlessly shifts into creepy use of angular shadows that prove to be extremely atmospheric.

Speaking of atmosphere, American Gothic Press's Thin weeps dread from every single panel. The story follows Doris, an abused housewife who seeks solace in food, and is deeply tormented by her appearance. As she catches her husband indulging in some hanky panky with a fitter, younger specimen, she pursues a dodgy means of weight loss, with what looks to be terrible consequences.

It's a horrific premise, and though it remains to be seen whether or not this book will genuinely emerge as unique from the pack, writer/illustrator Jon Clark has notched a solid start.

Northern Irish Outfit Revolve Comics conjured up Solstice #1, which offers a Game of Thrones influence combined with a tale of everlasting winters, heralds, and wolf-slaying. It's a familiar but engaging brand of fantasy that holds great promise.

Admittedly, the art is occasionally rough around the edges at this juncture, but the book does boast an attractive overall



[COMIC OF THE MONTH]

Frostbite

// STORY, JOSHUA WILLIAMSON // ART, JASON SHAWN ALEXANDER // PUBLISHER, DC VERTIGO

The primary attraction to *Frostbite* for many a reader will be the stunning artwork of Jason Shawn Alexander, fresh off his creator owned book, *Empty Zone*. It is pant-staining stuff too, beautifully complimented by the colours of Luis NCT. Joshua Williams' script is the stand-out though, a deftly written tale of survival in a second ice age. The pace is frenetic, with the initial issue introducing the key players, including main female protagonist Keaton, the 'frostbite' disease the book's title is taken from, and a high octane mission to manufacture a cure. There's even a whiff of betrayal before the first chapter's end. Lovely.

WONDER WOMAN HAS TOWERED ABOVE THE OTHERS IN THE PAST COUPLE OF MONTHS

design aesthetic. It's easy to see where improvements could be made by writer Danny McLaughlin and artist Nathan Donnell, but also clear that there is potential there.

Finally, DC has really hit their stride with many of their Rebirth titles. As one of their flagship books, *Wonder Woman* has towered above the others in the past couple of months, continually improving. Issues with Liam Sharp's artwork to boast have been particularly fantastic, and the addition of the underrated Jenny Frison on variant cover duty has been an exceptional treat.

Vertigo's effort at furthering *The Lost Boys* mythos is off to an intriguing start. Given that it's in the hands of Tim Seeley, that's not a huge surprise; the Chicago-based creator has made a habit of leaping between creator-owned projects and dealing with much-loved properties such as *G.I. Joe*, and the *Evil Dead's Ash*. *The Lost Boys* takes us back to Santa Carla, and humorously reintroduces readers to the principle players from the first movie. Although very much an introductory first issue, the series is already a colossal improvement on the dire sequels to the 1987 cinematic classic. **GM**

IN THE ART SEAT

JIM ZUB, WRITER [GLITTERBOMB, WAYWARD, THUNDERBOLTS]



What books do you remember influencing you as a youngster?

Like most kids, I read comic strips in the newspaper and other comics here and there. I also have fond memories of reading the *Spidey Super Stories* they used to run in *Electric Company* magazine. That said, the first comic I remember collecting with any regularity was Marvel's *G.I. Joe* series in the early 80s. I started collecting *G.I. Joe* and branched out from there into

other Marvel superhero comics, notably *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Dr. Strange*, and *Ghost Rider*. Throughout elementary and middle school I obsessively collected Marvel comics. By high school I started branching out into independent books like *TMNT*, *The Tick*, and *Cerebus*. By the time I graduated my brother had introduced me to manga and I dug deep into *Akira*, *Appleseed*, *Video Girl Ai*, and a slew of other Japanese comics.

How did you break into the industry? I guess it depends on how you define "breaking in?" I started creating my own web-comic in late 2001 and that introduced me to a community of online creators who were just getting their start. It didn't really make any money, but it definitely taught me a lot about comic storytelling. A couple of years later I moved back to Toronto and joined the UDON studio. While I was there I had a chance to start working in and around production – colouring, editing, project managing and, eventually, writing. My first paid comic writing gig was in 2005 on an UDON fantasy series called *Exalted* based on the *White Wolf* tabletop RPG of the same name.

What is a typical working day for Jim Zub? There are very few typical days lately. I still have a full time job teaching at Seneca College here in Toronto. Those regular classes provide some structure to my week, but it's not quite 9-5, 5 days a week. On days when I teach I can sometimes sneak in a bit of comic writing on my lunch break, but otherwise I usually come home, have dinner with my wife and then head into my studio to work most of the evening. Right now I'm juggling four monthly comics so there's a constant flow of story planning, solicitations, scripting, art approvals, letter proofs, marketing and scheduling for each one. It's pretty intense, but I really do enjoy the influx of new stuff coming in day after day. Seeing the books in print and on shelves is a point of pride for me.

What sort of pressures does a creator-owned comic bring, that perhaps fans don't realise? The good and bad of creator-owned is control. If the book is good it's because you made those decisions at each step, but if it doesn't work you're definitely the one to blame. The buck stops with the owners. It's exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time.

Your new title *Glitterbomb* is clearly a book with underlying themes and a lot of social commentary. *Glitterbomb* grew out of my own fear of failure and thoughts about fame. Hollywood seemed like a natural backdrop for those ideas and the more research I did the easier it was to build on that.

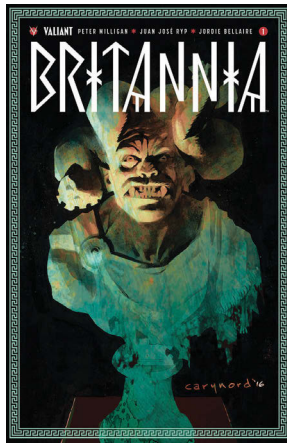
Are there any other creators you'd be especially keen on collaborating with? There are incredible and influential artists whose work I loved growing up – Paul Smith, Tradd Moore, Josh Middleton and a host of others.

COMIC CRITIQUE

GEEKY MONKEY HAS GOT KNEE DEEP IN GLOSSY PAPER AND BACKING BOARDS TO RIFLE THROUGH THE BEST AND WORST OF RECENT RELEASES IN COMIC BOOK STORES...

Britannia #1-2

STORY, PETER MILLIGAN // ART, JUAN JOSE RYP
// PUBLISHER, VALIANT COMICS

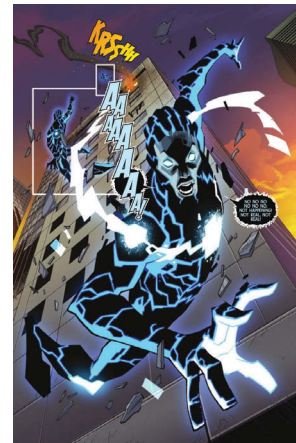


Valiant has been expanding their range to great places in 2016. Top of the pile is veteran scribe Peter Milligan's detective tale, set in Ancient Rome. Antonius Axia is an extremely strong character, at the centre of a riveting tale. At times, the violence is a tad gruesome, but it never feels indulgent, adding impact to the psychological manoeuvring at play. Staggering artwork too. Terrific stuff.

★★★★★

Mosaic #1

STORY, GEOFFREY THORNE // ART, KHARY RANDOLPH
// PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



Mosaic launched hindered by the expectations of speculators, primed to cash in on the crossover. As with many of the Inhumans books, it does feel as if Marvel is desperate for people to care a lot more than most do. Credit where it's due, Geoffrey Thorne's debut issue neatly introduces Morris Sackett, a body-hopping basketball player who has lost his own physical being. It's different, for sure.

★★★★★

Doom Patrol #1-2

STORY, GERARD WAY // ART, NICK DERINGTON
// PUBLISHER, DC/YOUNG ANIMAL



A resurrection of Doom Patrol is always an eyebrow-raising cause for tittering and excitement. In this case, it's handled by My Chemical Romance frontman, Gerard Way, whose writing ability is most certainly more than okay. Way's wackiness ensures that this is already looking like a worthy successor to the landmark Grant Morrison run, while Derington is the perfect artist for this project.

★★★★★

Star Wars: Han Solo #1-3

STORY, MARJORIE M. LIU // ART, MARK BROOKS
// PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



Everyone's favourite smuggler is the subject of one of Marvel's more recent Star Wars endeavours, a space-race dose of blockbuster fun. Most fans will find enough within this mini-series to satisfy, though as with many of these spin-offs, more casual readers may stray elsewhere. They'd be missing some really enjoyable light reading though, complimented by lovely artwork courtesy of Brooks.

★★★★★

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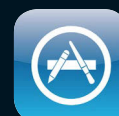
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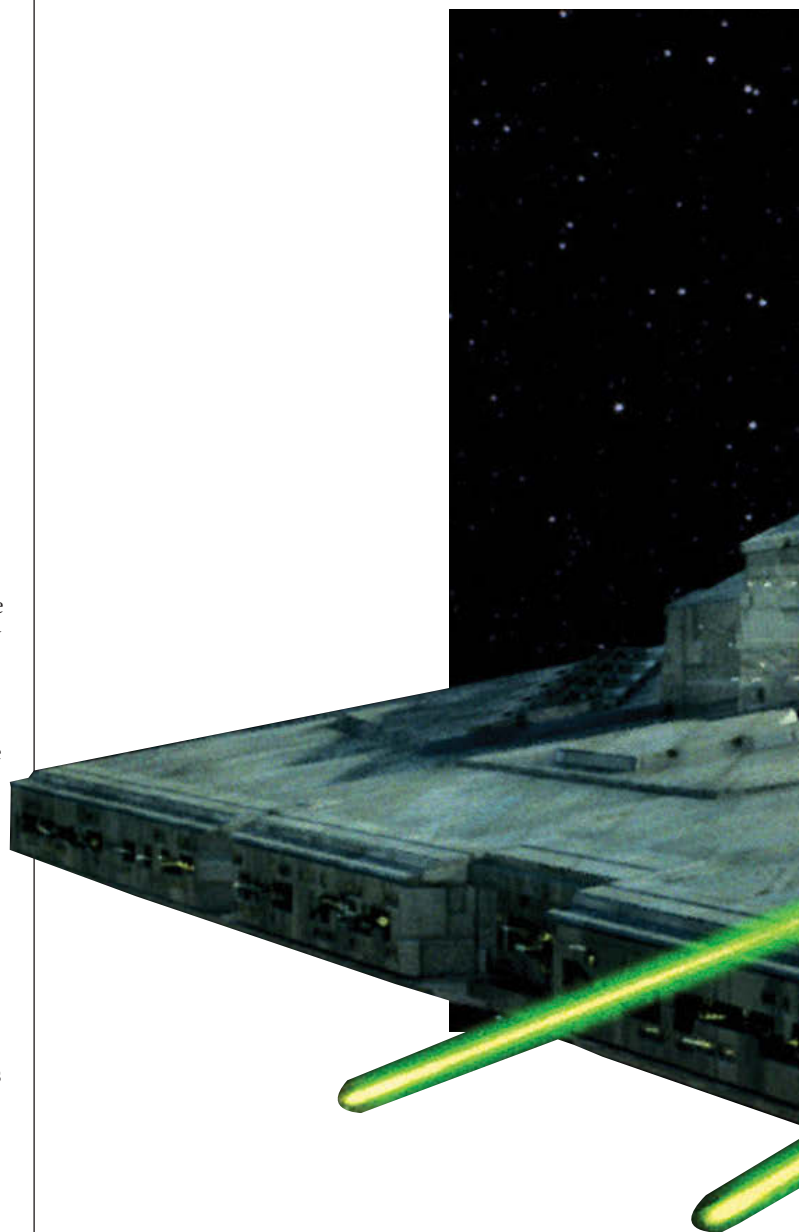
IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER

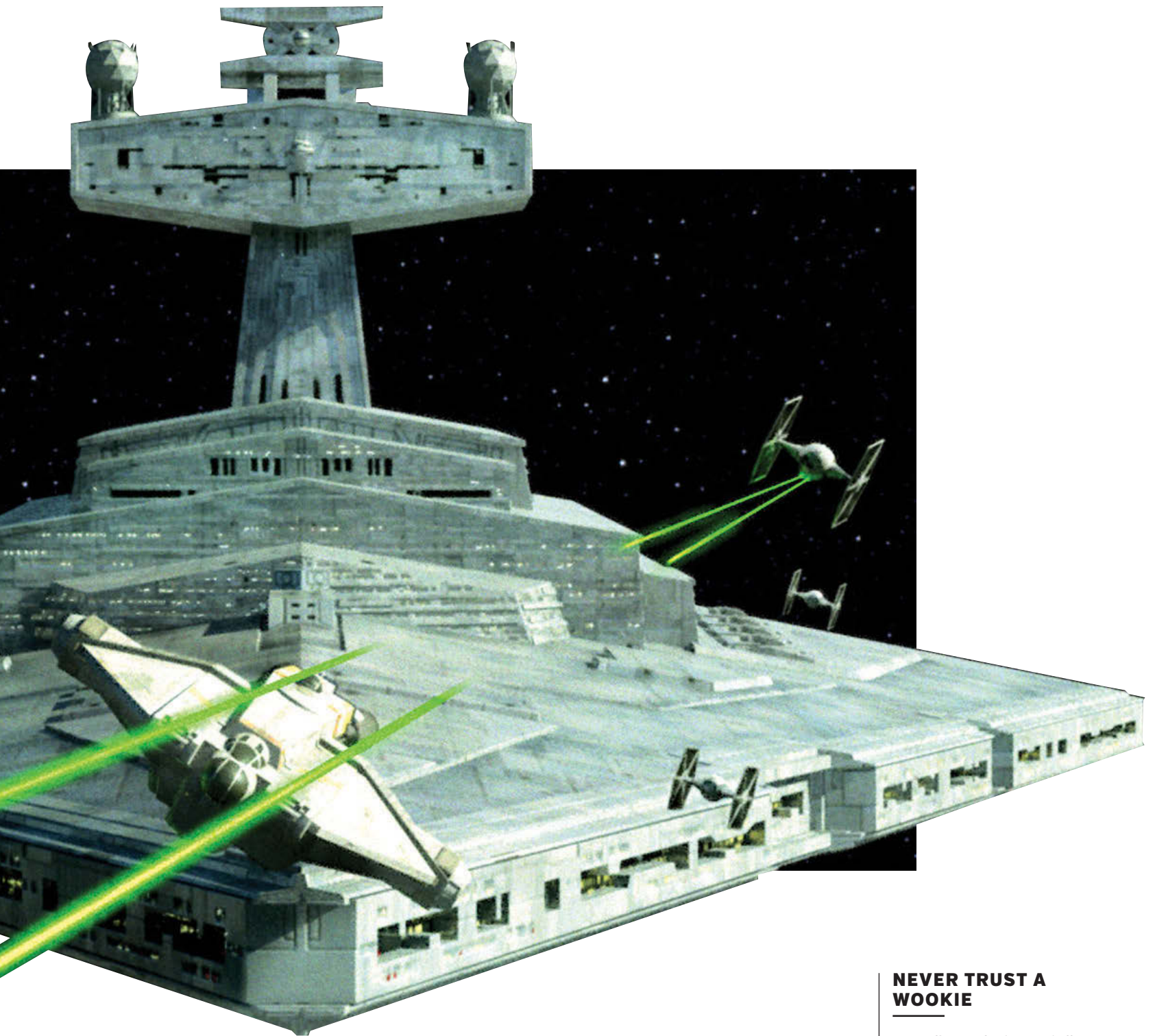
EVER SINCE THE ICONIC OPENING SCENE OF STAR WARS, LONG BEFORE IT WAS CALLED EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE, THE SINISTER SHAPE OF THE IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER HAS BEEN A SYMBOL OF THE GALACTIC EMPIRE

It's one of the most famous opening scenes in all of cinema. After the title and the opening text crawl, the main theme music fades away as the camera pans slowly down from a shot of space to show the surface of a desert planet. Suddenly, with a roar of engines and laser fire a small rebel spaceship flies into the frame, desperately shooting at something pursuing it. Then another much larger ship looms into view from the top of the frame, and keeps on coming as more and more of it slides into view, its huge bulk moving relentlessly past the camera until it fills almost the entire frame. At last we get bright blue glow of its massive engines and we can finally see the whole thing; it's the dagger-like shape of an Imperial Star Destroyer, a huge space battleship and the unmistakable symbol of the Evil Galactic Empire. Looking back now four decades later, it's hard for anyone under the age of 50 to understand just what it was like to watch Star Wars for the first time in 1977. It was as if, to borrow a phrase, we had just taken our first step into a larger world, and it was that amazing opening shot that told us what that world was like. It perfectly set up the story in just one brief scene; the small Rebel blockade-runner represented the out-matched and out-gunned Rebel Alliance, while the huge looming presence of the Star Destroyer, seeming to go on forever as it filled the screen, represented the power and reach of the Empire. It was visual storytelling at its best.

Star Wars didn't just change the lives of 70s teenagers, it changed the way that movies were made, particularly science fiction films. The techniques that George Lucas's special effects crew invented to make the film revolutionised the industry. Before Star Wars, spaceships in movies all looked either fantastically unrealistic, or like they were brand new; think of the campy vessels of *Barbarella*, or the gleaming white craft of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. What Star Wars did was to show us a science-fiction world that looked lived-in, with spaceships that looked like real military hardware.

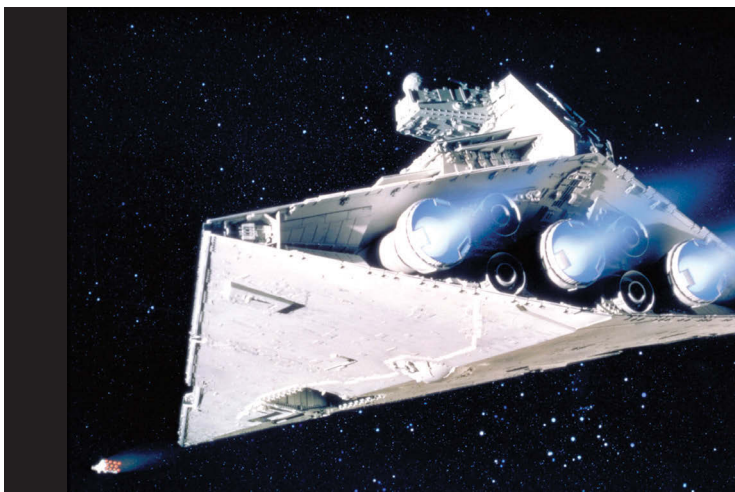
The secret of their success was a technique called kit-bashing. The modelmakers of what would become Industrial Light and Magic would take dozens of model kits of aircraft, cars and trucks, and other items found in hardware stores, break them down into parts and use them to detail the surfaces of their ship models and other props. Even things like the engines were simple household light fittings. ILM model maker Charlie Bailey, in a recent panel discussion, recalled, "My first job at ILM was to build the rocket engines for the big white Star Destroyer. I went off to the hardware store to see what I could find so I wouldn't have to make something, and I found some little aluminium clip-on work lights, took the reflectors off, put projector bulbs in them, decorated them a little bit and stuck them on the Star Destroyer." The shooting model of the Star Destroyer used in Star Wars was over two meters long, but if you've got a DVD of the film and good reflexes with the pause button you can have fun trying to identify some of the parts they used to make it, and with the forthcoming release of *Rogue One*, Revell has finally released a good detailed model, so you can build one yourself! **GM**





NEVER TRUST A WOOKIE

According to the fount of all Star Wars trivia, the indefatigable Wookieepedia, the classic original Star Destroyer is properly known as the Imperial-I Star Destroyer. It is 1,600m (one mile) long, with a crew of 37,000, plus a full division (9,700 men) of Imperial Stormtroopers. It carries six squadrons of TIE fighters (72 craft), and is armed with six heavy turbolasers and two heavy ion cannons, arranged in dual mounts either side of the bridge tower, as well as many other small and medium lasers mounted at other points around the hull. It has a large hanger in the underside, big enough to engulf smaller ships.



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The special effects in Doctor Strange are its strongest element – worth the ticket price alone.



[FILM]

Doctor Strange

DIRECTOR, SCOTT DERRICKSON // STARRING, BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH, CHIWETEL EJIOFOR, TILDA SWINTON
// STUDIO, MARVEL STUDIOS

It's a bit of a strange one – Doctor Strange turns the Marvel Cinematic Universe upside down. Quite literally. Blowing the dust off one of Marvel's iconic 60's superheroes, Doctor Strange brings magic and mysticism to the big screen with explosive action and Inception-style visuals.

But what's it all about? Marvel fans will already know the ins and outs, but for those of you who haven't read the decades worth of comic books, here's the gist of it:

Doctor Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) is a talented neurosurgeon. Naturally, this means he's also a bit of a jerk. He refuses to take patients who will ruin his 'perfect record' and manages to alienate himself from all his colleagues, except for the lovely E.R. surgeon, Christine Palmer (Rachel McAdams). All this comes to a crashing halt when a life-changing car accident leaves him with such severe nerve damage to his hands that he's unable to write or shave, much less perform delicate surgical procedures. His life in tatters, Strange becomes obsessed with fixing his broken hands, and when modern medicine gives up on him, he's forced to turn to more alternative methods.

"Forget everything you think you know," advises Mordo (Chiwetel Ejiofor) as he welcomes Strange into the mysterious world of magic and mysticism. But the real teacher comes in the form of the Ancient One (Tilda Swinton) – a Hare Krishna lookalike who goes beyond the trappings of a stereotypical mystical guru, blending ancient teachings with a sharp wit and piercingly odd look to create an almost alien-like, spiritual being.

Exchanging his surgical scrubs for a bright red sorcerer's cloak and a kick-ass goatee, his transformation into Doctor Strange is complete. But what began as a personal journey to fix his damaged hands soon turns into a fight to save the

NEW YORK CITY TURNS INSIDE OUT AS STRANGE AND MORDO TRAVERSE THE CHAOS

entire world from Kaecilius (Mads Mikkelsen) – a former pupil of the Ancient One who was corrupted by an extra-dimensional evil.

Not quite what he had in mind, then. Unfortunately, the plot treads familiar territory. There's the arrogant hero whose life is irreversibly altered, and following a brief personal quest, he changes for the better. So far, so Iron Man. It's a fairly standard origin story, but the film's visual effects are where it really shines. It's no secret that Doctor Strange has been compared to Christopher Nolan's sci-fi masterpiece, Inception. The similarities are obvious, New York City turns inside out as Strange and Mordo traverse the chaos that's literally unfolding around them. Director Scott Derrickson has cranked the mind-bending visuals up to eleven, with some impressive action scenes which see Doctor Strange battling Kaecilius through twisting, folding cityscapes that would give M.C. Escher a headache. Make no mistake – Doctor Strange is visually spectacular. It's also far from perfect.

It's not the most original movie. Its tight action and blistering effects can only do so much, and it's often let down by the sheer simplicity of its story. Still, you can't help but appreciate it for what it is – a solid superhero flick with enough action and spectacle to keep your interest until the end. Just don't expect Doctor Strange to alter your reality too much. **GM**

☆☆☆☆☆



[FILM]

Jack Reacher: Never Go Back

DIRECTED BY, EDWARD ZWICK // STARRING, TOM CRUISE, COBIE SMULDERS
// STUDIO, PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Throughout the two hours I spent watching the latest Tom Cruise action vehicle, I found myself unable to stop thinking about the film's subtitle – Never Go Back. These three seemingly innocuous and generic words are arguably the cleverest thing about this film, not only managing to neatly sum up the movie's theme but also serving as solid career advice for Tom Cruise.

The sequel to 2012's silly but enjoyable blockbuster action flick, *Jack Reacher*, sees Cruise once again step into the boots of the world's smuggest action hero. Still on shaky territory after the last film, Jack finds himself working as a freelance operative, delivering baddies a beating and a poorly written quip, for what I can only assume is a pretty solid hourly rate.

The opening scene is fairly promising, offering a silly but tense showdown between Reacher and the police that sets the film up for the kind of ridiculous thriller-lite action that the original excelled at. Yet just as things are looking up for Reacher, poor Jack soon finds himself at the centre of a sprawling military conspiracy once again. With Reacher's military colleague come love interest Susan Turner accused of Treason, Reacher embarks on a quest to clear her name, freeing Turner and going on the run.

Attempting to straddle the line between tense political thriller and balls out action film, *Never Go Back* manages to fail spectacularly at both. Most of the film is spent with our protagonists moving from location to location, following them from mundane car journey, to stop offs at internet cafes, with a smattering of ludicrous fight scenes in between.

ATTEMPTING TO STRADDLE THE LINE BETWEEN TENSE POLITICAL THRILLER AND BALLS OUT ACTION FILM, NEVER GO BACK MANAGES TO FAIL SPECTACULARLY

Yet for a story all about action and suspense, the sense of tension is never palatable and bizarrely, action scenes are few and far between.

Directed by Edward Zwick of *The Last Samurai* fame, you can't help but feel sorry for Cruise for putting his trust in this once reliable partner. With Reacher stuck on the run, he needs an interesting sub plot to fill the time, but unfortunately, none of the characters here are fleshed out enough to make you care. How I Met Your Mother's Cobie Smulders is stuck playing walking plot device Susan Turner, who despite her best efforts, fails to create a character worth watching. A bizarre introduction of a daughter figure half way attempts to help pad out the travelling scenes, but by then it's too little too late.

Without the characters to keep the game of cat and mouse interesting or a single exciting action scene, this film fails on all fronts. For your own sake, avoid.

☆☆☆☆☆

Explore the unique bond between man and machine in Respawn Entertainment's sequel to Titanfall.



[GAME]

Titanfall 2

£42 // PC, PS4, XB1
PUBLISHER, ELECTRONIC ARTS

While the first game from the original team behind Call of Duty was released as an Xbox One exclusive, EA Games has wisely opted to make this massively hyped sequel a multi-platform affair, which means PS4 fans can now join in on the giant Titan action that debuted back in 2014. This time around Respawn has smartly woven in a decent single player campaign complete with a meaty fable.

You play as everyman Jack Cooper, who gets his hands on Titan BT-7274 after its previous operator dies. From here you quickly develop a relationship with the sassy mechanical beast as you hurtle through deftly crafted missions bustling with fire-fights, villainous mercenaries and trigger happy Mechs, while at the same time navigating the story's many twists and turns cooked up by the team.

Sure, the single player element makes for a fun time, but the multiplayer – with its streamlined roster of features – is the real draw here. Maps are smaller, which means you now spend less time chasing the action, whereas customisation has been overhauled in favour of a more simplified experience.

Titanfall is probably the most fun we've had with a multiplayer game in a while, and it's possible the game could give Call of Duty and Battlefield a run for their money in the multiplayer stakes if community support remains solid.

☆☆☆☆☆



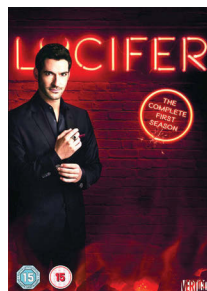
[GAME]

Paper Mario Color Splash

£37 // WiiU
PUBLISHER, NINTENDO

A new Nintendo game is always something to make true gamers rejoice. Paper Mario Color Splash is full of the quality, polish and heart that has made Nintendo such a success, but while an updated Paper Mario adventure would have been a joy, these days game designers have to shoehorn in Pokémon-esque enemy encounters and cards that must be collected, painted and used in turn-based battles... because, that's what everyone wants, right? Wrong. It makes the game stuttery and slow.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

Lucifer, Season 1

£20 // STUDIO, WARNER HOME VIDEO

Once you get over the shock of seeing that guy from Miranda striding through a darkly-lit LA set, Lucifer is one of a variety of theological action thrillers plugging gaps in US TV schedules, and one that's definitely worth watching, albeit no Preacher (a crossover would be good, though). Based on a Neil Gaiman co-created comic book, the series sees the Devil escaping Hell to run a club in Los Angeles – and finding his lack of faith in mankind is challenged.

☆☆☆☆☆



[TV]

Class

STARRING, GREG AUSTIN, KATHERINE KELLY
// CHANNEL, BBC THREE

On the outside, Class seems like a Doctor Who spin-off made for the younger generation of Whovians, a bit like The Sarah Jane Adventures or K-9 and Company. But a viewing of episode one will soon quash those thoughts – this is actually quite dark, with aliens that have grit and menace, and some true peril as the kids of Coal Hill School attempt to survive their prom dance. Some lose legs, others are vaporized. Luckily for all, Peter Capaldi turns up to save the day. Well worth checking out.

☆☆☆☆☆

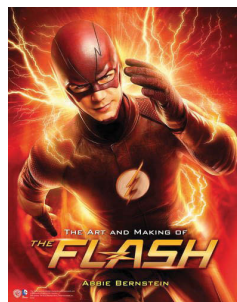


[GRAPHIC NOVEL]
2000AD: Prog 2000

£15 // STARRING, BEN AFFLECK, HENRY CAVILL
// DIRECTOR, ZACK SNYDER // STUDIO, WARNER

2000AD celebrates entering its second millennium that acts as both a great celebration of and introduction to the Galaxy's Greatest Comic. What is striking about this issue is how brilliant it looks. That's not surprising considering the murderer's row of artistic talent featured. Brian Bolland (Batman The Killing Joke), Kev O'Neil (League of Extraordinary Gentlemen) and Dave Gibbons (Watchmen) all bring their A-game upon their return to the comic's pages after so long away. The writing is just as accomplished. John Wagner slyly uses Judge Dredd's long history to spin a quirky yarn that delivers a classic Strontium Dog tale as the future lawman once again teams up with Johnny Alpha. Pat Mills eschews tight plotting to deliver a series of darkly satiric imagery that utilises O'Neil's talent for grotesque imagery. Meanwhile the comic's editor, Matt Smith, impressively manages to make the one-page interludes tell a coherent story whilst cramming in as many references and in-jokes as possible.

★★★★★

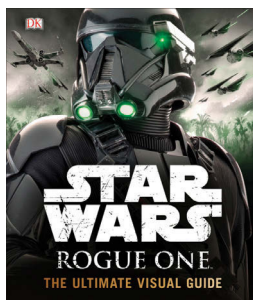


[BOOK]
The Art and Making of The Flash

£17 // AUTHOR, ABBIE BERNSTEIN
PUBLISHER, TITAN BOOKS

Creating blockbuster television these days is as big an undertaking as the blockbuster movies. So much production art, storyboards, concepting and model making goes on behind the scenes to bring a realistic world to the small screen. With Video On Demand we no longer watch the DVD extras we used to (a relief to leave those director's commentaries behind), so these Making Of books are to be cherished as they showcase the craftsmanship that goes into a show like The Flash in minute detail. Abbie Bernstein, who has previously written Fantastic 4 and The Guild books, has done a great job in putting The Art and Making of The Flash together, it has interviews with the stars and crew, breakdowns of the weapons and gadgets and some excellent behind-the-scenes photography and production art to pore over. The book covers the first two seasons of the hit show, so you can also enjoy it without worry of spoilers if you're yet to get stuck into season three currently showing on Sky1.

★★★★★



[BOOK]
Star Wars Rogue One: The Ultimate Visual Guide

£18 // PUBLISHER, DK

Spoilers mean that there's no chance to get hold of this book until the new movie is already out, or we'd be recommending it as an exciting taster for Rogue One, but as it is, the most die-hard small fans of Star Wars should be pleased to get this under the tree this year, packed as it is with simply-written facts and secrets about the first big-screen Star Wars cash-in... sorry, cinematic spin-off. It's all geared towards passing time until Episode VIII arrives, anyway.

★★★★★



[TV]
Supergirl, Season 2

STARRING, MELISSA BENOIST, MEHCAD BROOKS
// CHANNEL, SKY1

Supergirl is back and already we're starting to see the positive effects of switching from CBS to The CW, with the show embracing the larger DC Universe at hand and, oh yes, giving us the best guest star of all: Superman. He may only have appeared for two episodes (don't be surprised if we see more), but seeing the both of them on-screen together at last was, well, magical. Here's hoping then that the series can continue to soar so brilliantly in his absence.

★★★★★



[BOOK]
Geek's Guide to Britain

£20 // EDITOR, GAVIN CLARKE
PUBLISHER, SITUATION PUBLISHING

Each issue we tell you the best geeky movie and TV locations around the British Isles in our Map of Geek, but the authors of the Geek's Guide to Britain have taken geekery to a new level. This book explores the locations of important inventions and places where notable scientists and engineers worked in areas like electricity, medicine, civil engineering and the internet. We recommend a visit to the power station inside a mountain – buy it from theregister.co.uk.

★★★★★

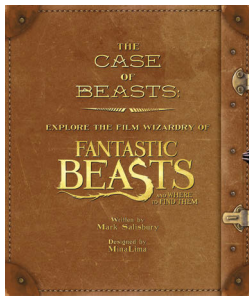


[TV] Arrow, Season 5

STARRING, STEPHEN AMELL, KATIE CASSIDY
// CHANNEL, SKY1

Showing now on Sky1 every Wednesday, Arrow Season 5 is certainly a return to form for the story of DC Comics' Green Arrow as he trains young heroes Wild Dog, Mister Terrific, Artemis and Ragman. It's the show that has spawned all others, with spin-offs The Flash and DC's Legends of Tomorrow doing great business. What's super exciting about season five is the 100th episode crossover event The CW has planned in, which begins in The Flash and will end in Legends of Tomorrow.

☆☆☆☆☆



[BOOK] The Case of Beasts: Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

£17 // WRITER, MARK SALISBURY
// PUBLISHER, HARPERCOLLINS

Remember the excitement when the 'final' Harry Potter book came out, with Jo Rowling swearing to move into adult novels from that day forward? Who would have thought we'd be here in 2016 with whole truckloads of Hogwarts paraphernalia being dumped on our front lawns month in, month out, forever. This tie-in for the new movie (the first of FIVE), set in 1920s New York in the Potter universe... is a Making Of book for the most committed wearers of the Hogwarts sorting hat.

☆☆☆☆☆



[TV] The Flash, Season 3

STARRING, GRANT GUSTIN, CANDICE PATTON
// CHANNEL, SKY1

We feel a crossover TV event coming on, as our review of Arrow mentions, episode eight of this third season of The Flash, called 'Invasion!' starts the story, that's continued in Arrow, then finished in Legends of Tomorrow. To us, The Flash has proven to be the best of the DC TV shows, a slick mix of time travel, humour and super hero powers with a great cast and excellent FX. Supergirl is a bit sickly sweet, Arrow a bit dark, The Flash has it just right. Catch up with the SkyGo or NowTV apps.

☆☆☆☆☆

Can you believe it? This is the 13th Call of Duty game in the main series. Seems like only yesterday we started playing...



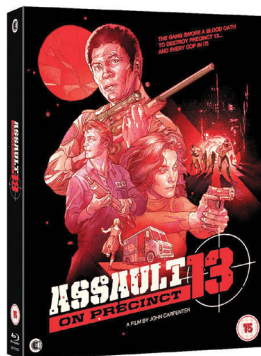
[GAME] Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare

£45 // PC, PS4, XB1
PUBLISHER, ACTIVISION

Another year, another Call of Duty, but in a smart move Infinity Ward wisely kicked its 2013 Ghosts sub-series to the kerb and started from scratch, crafting a title that, while set in the far reaches of space, still plays and feels like a Call of Duty title; one of the better ones that is. Set in a world where colonies are spread out across the expanses of the universe, Infinite Warfare thrusts you in the military boots of a United Nations Space Navy pilot to do battle with Kit Harington's (Game of Thrones) one-dimensional super villain. Yes, it's all very clichéd, but that doesn't mean it's any less enjoyable.

There are some riveting missions to play here, including zero gravity shoot-outs and killer deep space dog-fights in tricked out starfighters that, unlike before, remove the on-the-rails moments and grant you total control over the action unfurling on the screen. Frankly, this is probably the strongest campaign mode in the series since the days of Modern Warfare. Multiplayer is on top form too, with the excellent Eighties-themed Zombies Mode that ultimately winds up being the most enjoyable add-on in terms of the multiplayer package. It's fast, fun and fiendishly difficult, but that's what why we keep coming back for more.

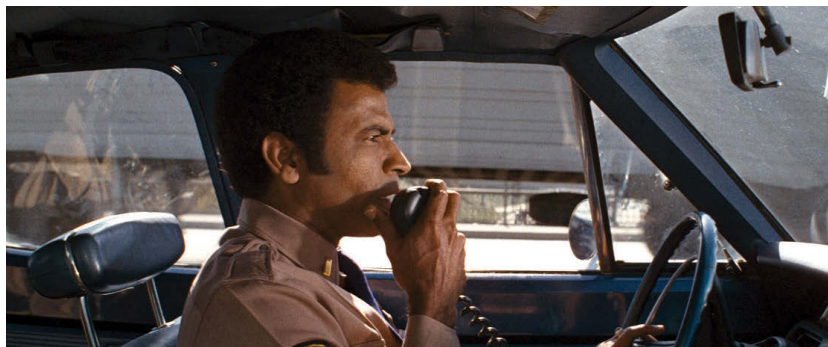
☆☆☆☆☆



[BLU-RAY]

Assault on Precinct 13: 40th Anniversary Ltd Ed

£25 // STARRING, AUSTIN STOKER // DIRECTOR, JOHN CARPENTER // STUDIO, SECOND SIGHT



Over the years the 1976 picture Assault on Precinct 13 has been re-evaluated and slowly gained the status it always deserved. Still, it's shocking to revisit John Carpenter's sophomore effort and realise just how impressive a piece of work it is. A masterfully directed exercise in pant-shredding tension, with a terrific frisson of unpredictability that hasn't always been captured by bigger budgeted productions. Yes, it's flawed, but it's one of those films that reminds us how exciting and dangerous American cinema felt in the Seventies.

This 40th Anniversary edition boasts a freshly cleaned up image and bonus features aplenty. These include five informative interviews, a Carpenter student flick, and the documentary 'Do you remember Laurie Zimmer'. The set also includes the usual trailers and radio spots, in addition to two commentary tracks. It would be churlish to expect anything more from this release than the extravagant package offered; it really is an appropriate effort for such a key hunk of Seventies cult brilliance.

If you've ever pondered why you've never seen an amalgamation of Rio Bravo and Night of the Living Dead in the shape of a modern-day western, you need to experience Assault on Precinct 13.

★★★★☆



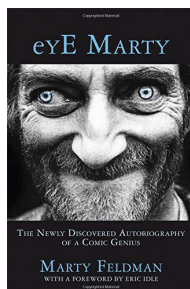
[DVD]

Ghostbusters: Answer The Call

£10 // DIRECTOR, PAUL FEIG
STUDIO, SONY PICTURES

There's no denying that this year's Ghostbusters reboot was ultimately a disappointment. We gave it four stars on cinema review, but on reflection, three is closer the mark. It's a fun story, well directed, well acted with some cool special effects, but it somehow doesn't manage to recapture the magic that the original movies had. Maybe going for all-female Busters was a mistake, a mixed crew would have avoided all of that vitriol. Sony has a lot of cash to recoup, so they're hoping for big sales this Christmas.

★★★★☆



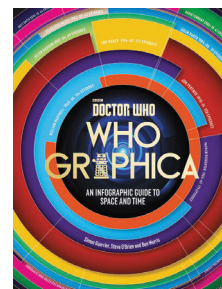
[BOOK]

eYE Marty

£17 // WRITER, MARTY FELDMAN
PUBLISHER, CORONET

Subtitled 'The newly discovered autobiography of a comic genius', this is a truly remarkable publication for any comedy fan. Despite sadly retreating from public consciousness into a cult figure in the 30 years since his death, famed mainly for his role in Young Frankenstein, British comedy owes a huge debt to Feldman, and until recently the idea of his own memoirs existing was impossible. But this is his incredible life story, exactly as he left it, ready for publication, as he breathed his last.

★★★★★



[BOOK]

Doctor Who: Who Graphica

£17 // WRITERS, STEVE O'BRIEN, SIMON GUERRIER, BEN MORRIS // PUBLISHER, BBC

If you love graphic design, and you're also a sci-fi fan (let's face it, there's a lot of you out there), then a book like the Who Graphica should be a thing of beauty for you. And it is, to a point. Facts and figures from the entire history of Doctor Who are displayed in typographical and infographic form, with quality illustration work on the icons, characters, TARDIS and timelines. Our main beef is that the sections tend to repeat, obviously running out of 'graphica' ideas to sustain the book's main theme for long.

★★★★☆

Enter King Ezekiel, powerful ruler, or amateur dramatics fan out of his depth?



[TV]

The Walking Dead, Season 7

STARRING, ANDREW LINCOLN, JEFFREY DEAN MORGAN
// CHANNEL, FOX UK

After one of the most agonising waits in recent memory The Walking Dead returned with a bang, and it was a particularly brutal one for Glen and Abraham who had their skulls bashed in by the baseball bat-swinging bastard that is Negan, played with fiendish delight by Jeffrey Dean Morgan.

It was a moment we knew was coming for a long time given what's already played out in the comic book by creator Robert Kirkman. And while Glen's death was a shoe-in, Abraham's came as a nasty shock to us, but he damn sure took it like a man, telling Negan to "suck my nuts" before that barbed bat sent brain matter flying. Was it too much? With so much hype surrounding the return the producers knew they had to go all out. If anything, the most unsettling beat was Glen's death being caused by Daryl, which has no doubt irked fans and is guaranteed to have an affect on the relationships between characters down the line. While we were granted a breather in the second episode, with the producers wisely shifting gears, we can't help but feel there's a whole heap of misery in store for our survivors over the remaining episodes, but if there's one thing we know that's set in stone, it's that there will be blood and baseball bats galore.

☆☆☆☆☆

[GAME]

Battlefield 1

£42 // PC, XB1, PS4
PUBLISHER, ELECTRONIC ARTS

It's no secret Battlefield's single player campaigns have, well, sucked over the years, so imagine our surprise here at Geeky Monkey when we quickly discovered that DICE's 14th edition of the series features not just the most tightly crafted single player campaign of the franchise, but also the best.

Yes, big 64-player brawls are back, and the game's tried and tested multiplayer formula remains largely intact for the die hard fans, but it's the single player narrative that simply dazzles from start to finish here, thanks to some smart thinking on behalf of the team of writers involved in bringing it to life.

Rather than plonk you into the military boots of a single soldier over the course of a ten-hour campaign, DICE has crafted a series of War Stories, each one following a different perspective in alternative parts of the globe over the course of the pretty harrowing events of World War 1.

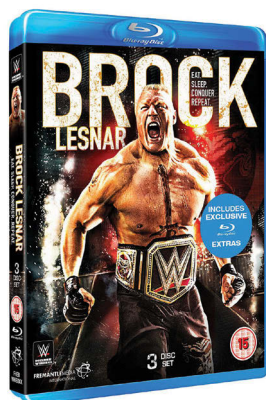
It's a genius idea, allowing the story to eschew padding and breathe at a far more acceptable pace compared to previous entries in the series and the likes of the Call of Duty titles that generally feel like an arduous slog towards the end. Battlefield 1 is an absolute triumph for DICE, and you'd be hard pressed to find a better single player campaign in a shooter this year.

☆☆☆☆☆



It's the battle of the battlefields this Christmas. Are you a Battlefield fan, or more of a Call of Duty nut?





[BLU-RAY]

WWE: Brock Lesnar Eat. Sleep. Conquer. Repeat.

£24 //
STUDIO, FREMANTLE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

**THE NO
MERCY 2003
“BIKE CHAIN”
MATCH WITH
UNDERTAKER
WAS A CHORE
AT THE TIME,
BUT WITH
HINDSIGHT,
IT’S BARMY
FUN, FILLED
WITH
UNLIKELY
CAMEOS**

First things first, Eat. Sleep. Conquer. Repeat. is by no means a definitive Brock Lesnar retrospective. This is a collection of (somewhat) random bouts, interlinked with chit-chat from the former UFC heavyweight Champion, filmed at various stages of his career.

It’s a strange beast because so many previous WWE releases have covered Lesnar’s biggest moments, multiple times. This compilation therefore, feels like the scraps left over... but fortunately, those are extremely tasty nuggets indeed.

The early interviews included are filmed during the course of previous Brock retrospectives, therefore, they feel like out-takes that don’t quite fit with the matches they accompany. Nonetheless, it’s intriguing to have a gander into the psyche of such a private, introvert athlete, as he develops. Later instalments have a bit more coherency, but they’re hindered by the same efforts to avoid repetition, thus leaving aside important chapters in Lesnar’s tale. Regardless, he’s a compelling subject as always, but you’ll be left wishing he’d break character a little and delve into the fascinating politics behind his career. His derogatory comments towards the modern WWE roster are hilarious though.

This set really excels between the ropes. Lesnar himself has now transformed into a bonkers special attraction who subverts storyline, carrying a tremendous sense of danger and reality, even if his recent efforts have disappointed. Somehow, the believability of Lesnar’s presentation allows him to retain his mythic aura. This is evident throughout the 14 contests (plus five extra blu-ray scraps).

Throughout, viewers are treated to vital matches from Lesnar’s first WWE tenure with Triple H, The Undertaker and Kurt Angle, but rather than their most famous efforts, they’re largely battles from non-Wrestlemania events. The Angle match (Summerslam 2003) is gripping, whereas HHH’s contributions in two sluggish outings

underwhelm. The No Mercy 2003 “Bike Chain” match with Undertaker was a chore at the time, but with hindsight, it’s barmy fun, filled with unlikely cameos. They do also include the historic Wrestlemania XXX clash with ‘Taker, but aside from the ending, the scrap is passable at best.

Meanwhile, a January 2002 dark (taped but untelevised) match with Mr Perfect, is a surprisingly enjoyable tussle considering Brock’s inexperience. And in fact; when speaking of the late Curt Hennig (Perfect), Brock’s emotional comments are staggeringly genuine.

Lesnar’s Summerslam 2013 war with CM Punk is a blistering battle, well worth repeat viewings. It’s also one of those stories in which Brock’s frequent absences are hugely compensated for by manager Paul Heyman’s contributions.

A demolition of John Cena at Summerslam 2013 is stunningly effective, while a triple threat re-matching of those two along with Seth Rollins, is absolutely exhilarating. The main event from Wrestlemania XXXI is also genuinely epic. At this point, Lesnar’s potential to be an anti-hero of Stone Cold proportions was completely evident, but somehow the company managed to squander that momentum. Nonetheless, the period did result in the entertaining meeting with Rollins one-on-one, featured here. Lesnar and The Undertaker have fought too many times down the years (including a 2002 Hell in Cell effort) for this 2015 Cell rerun to be enticing, but the consequential match up is a bloodthirsty endurance test.

The producers of Lesnar’s latest may well have titled it “The Beast at Summerslam,” because that is where the majority of the good stuff here emanates from. Still, this is a fine companion piece if you have the previous Here Comes the Pain release. Lesnar is unlike anyone else in contemporary mainstream wrestling, and that is genuinely reflected here.

★★★★★

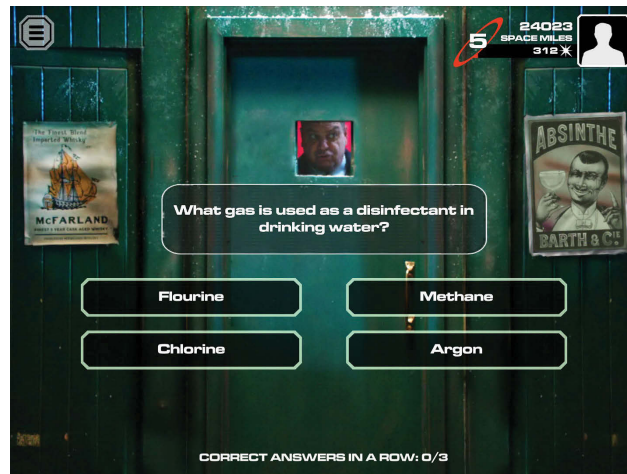
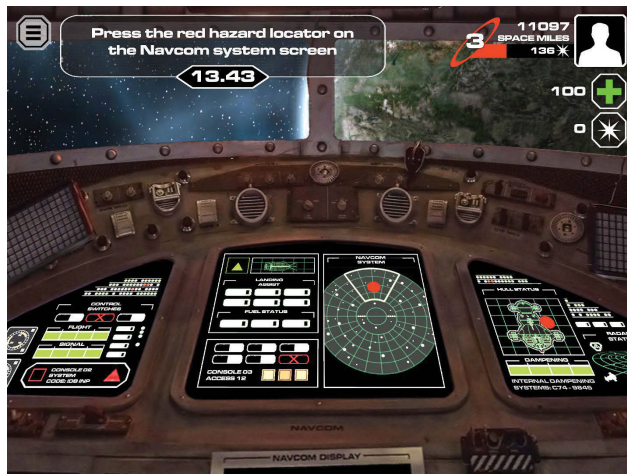
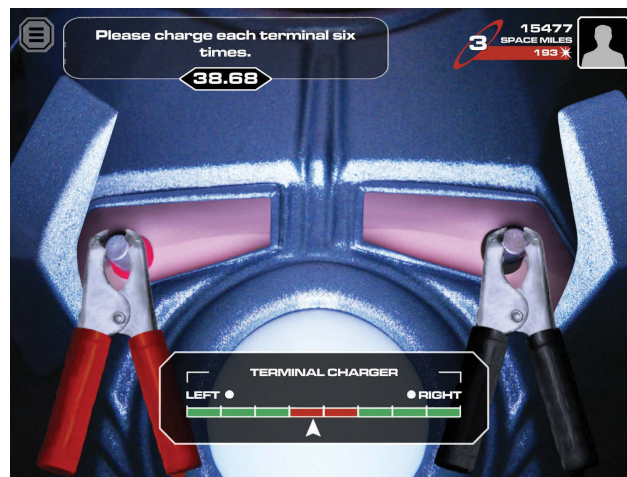
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Seems like UKTV needs to choose its developers more carefully, as their Red Dwarf XI game scores a 2 out of 5.



Red Dwarf XI: The Game

iOS £1.99 // ANDROID £1.99
DEVELOPER, UKTV MEDIA/GAMEDIGITS

This might seem out of place in a review of a game based on the new adventures of the boys from the Dwarf, but which number comes next in the Fibonacci series 1, 1, 2, 3 and 5? Right, now how many hearts does an octopus have? Oh, and you're not getting to the next paragraph until you can tell us the reciprocal of 2.

Well that probably felt a bit unnecessary, and would feel even more so had we the space to then ask you another but longer series of questions, and then another. It is, however, exactly the sort of thing you'll be tasked to do in this collection of dull and quite sloppy mini-games that are meant to make you, the player, feel involved in each episode of the new series of the hit sci-fi comedy show. They don't.

Starting with a series of activities based on the first episode, Twentica, with more released for download as episodes air, there's certainly a fair attempt to reproduce key scenes. You'll get to place clamps on Kryten's nipples, for example, and recharge him with a jump by spinning a dial, and then timing some taps. It's almost amusing the first time you do it. The problem is that you'll be tasked with performing it multiple times, and the same goes for every single activity.

Didn't really enjoy making Starbug dodge some asteroids and collect glowing orbs? Fair enough, it was a bit numbing. Now do it again, and again – only this time for longer. Now help Rimmer escape from aliens by making him seemingly drift along from left to right as he moves forward, occasionally stopping to avoid electrical surges or to use a Bazookoid in the least effective way possible? Now do it again, but with a different character. And again. And now it's time for a quiz. Don't worry, a lot of the questions will be

HELP RIMMER ESCAPE FROM ALIENS BY MAKING HIM SEEMINGLY DRIFT ALONG

ones you've already answered correctly, so while you'll have an increasing number to ponder, you'll already know many of the the right responses. Which number comes next in the Fibonacci series 1, 1, 2, 3, 5?

Back in the mid 1980s Ocean Software took films like The Untouchables, Platoon, Batman and Robocop, and created some fantastic licensed games built of a few smaller and quite different slices of gameplay. While even at the time it felt somewhat cheap, there was a fair chance that you'd enjoy the majority of them and may even still fondly recall having the Batmobile take a 90 degree turn by launching grappling hooks at lampposts. The approach can certainly work, and has worked well. The problem is that Red Dwarf XI: The Game doesn't feature any activities that are actually that fun the first time you experience them, let alone the fourth.

Perhaps as later episodes are released the situation will improve, and since those episodes will be free then they'll be no extra cost to finding out. It's possible, but for it to be so you'd have to assume GameDigits has imagined that boring a player is the best way to keep them hungry for more, or just can't tell a fun, engaging and replayable mini-game from one that becomes tiresome in minutes. Right, so how many hearts does an octopus have? Don't Google the answer. You'll break the immersion.

☆☆☆☆

Invisible Inc.

iOS £3.99 //
DEVELOPER, KLEI ENTERTAINMENT



Turn-based and tactical like XCOM, stealthy like Metal Gear, and set in a cyberpunk Android: Netrunner-like future, this remarkably generous offering is exactly as utterly fantastic as you could imagine. It's also absolutely ruthless, since the longer

you spend having your agents sneaking around locations, hacking servers and security cameras, avoiding guards or rendering them unconscious for a few turns, the tougher it gets as the alert level automatically rises. And there comes its only rub. Invisible, Inc. is a beautifully crafted and involving game that perfectly suits touch screen controls, but it can also be terrifyingly punishing. A set number of time-rewinds mitigates some of its harshness, but even so it's possible for one single mistake to utterly ruin your day, and while that certainly adds a hefty layer of tension to every beautifully rendered and randomly generated infiltration, you really do need to be able to handle a fair amount of frustration. When you're performing well, get in, get what you're after, get out, you'll feel like an absolute pro. Especially if you do so unseen. Mess up, fail to recover, and permanently lose a beloved agent, and you'll be in danger of feeling like a complete fool. Suck it up. It's worth it.

★★★★★



Burly Men At Sea

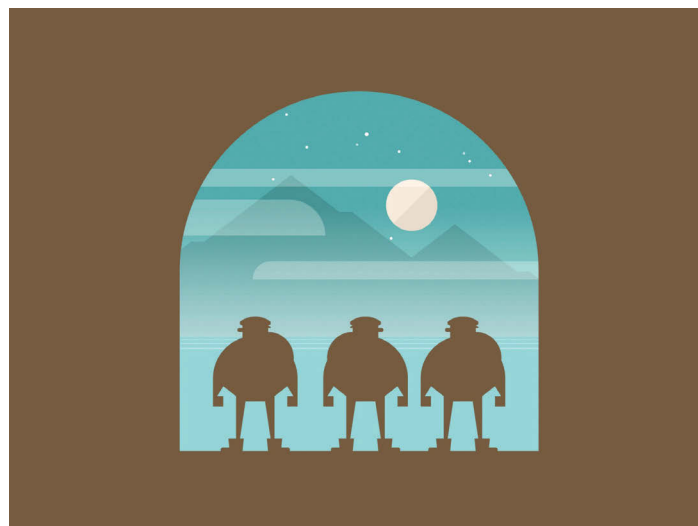
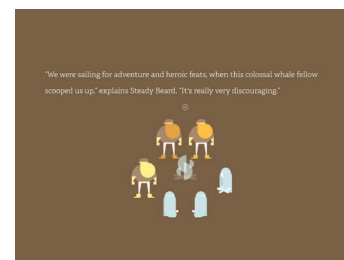
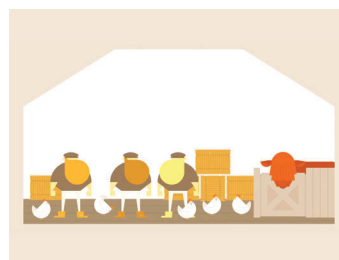
iOS £2.99 // ANDROID £4.49 // STEAM £6.99
DEVELOPER, BRAIN&BRAIN



The Brothers Beards are three burley men (with beards) who go to sea, and from that very simple starting point we get possibly the most charming and endearing take on the concept of interactive fiction ever made. Visually this game is a refined delight of minimalist design

and block colour. But not only does it look like a Scandinavian storybook come to life, its sound effects and musical track have been constructed using nothing more than human vocal chords and the results are equally exceptional. You might encounter a blacksmith hammering away at a horseshoe, and with every strike you'll hear an onomatopoeic "dink!" When the wind blows you might even catch yourself mouthing the swooshing sounds. This isn't just a game created with great skill, its been created with love, and while it's possible to complete in less than half an hour, its built on so many multiple paths and secrets that you can play again and again, make different choices, investigate different areas, and come up with completely different tales. It's small but it's perfectly formed. Above all, not only does Burley Men at Sea let you spin many great yarns, it does so in a manner that's deeply and wondrously soothing. Treat yourself.

★★★★★



Unbox

STEAM £11.99 //
DEVELOPER, PROSPECT GAMES



Taking its lead from such late Nineties classics as Spyro the Dragon, Banjo-Kazooie and Super Mario 64, this excellent platform game puts you in the role of a cardboard box working for a

delivery company. Yep, you play a box. A box that you roll around vividly drawn environments and make perform double jumps and bottom-bounces, and still manage to do a better job than Yodel. Unbox is a wonderful homage to the heyday of the platform genre, with plenty of challenge and boss battles. It's just a shame it suffers from overly long unskippable cut-scenes.

★★★★☆



Really Bad Chess

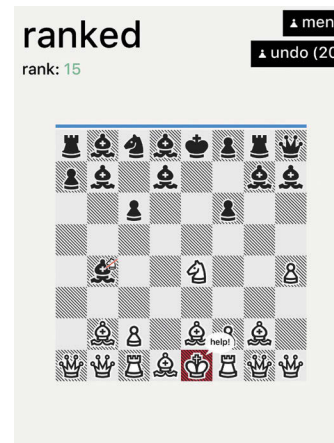
iOS FREE //
DEVELOPER, ZACH GAGE



For no cost whatsoever you can own a version of Chess for your Apple device that's terrible. Not convinced? Then you need to consider why it really is bad, because that's what makes Really Bad Chess actually really quite good. To quote the developer, "Chess is one of

those games I always wished I enjoyed, but its commitment to beauty, elegance, and perfect balance always turned me away. Really Bad Chess removes these boring restrictions." Simply put, you'll play with a random selection of many of the same pieces. You could have four queens, or just one bishop, and so on. This truly awful way to set up a board actually makes for an impressively cunning new way to play. It shouldn't work, yet it really does.

★★★★☆



Flappy Golf 2

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE
DEVELOPER, NOODLECAKE STUDIOS



It's golf meets Flappy Bird – and it's already on the sequel, how did that happen?! And by now you're possibly mid-way through a long groan. That's understandable. We groaned too until we started playing, and played some more, then some more, and then discovered the excellent multiplayer mode and people willing to install the game on their device. Mashing the classic videogame golf with the flapping mechanic from 'that game' was a stroke of genius. Noodlecake Studios really do know what they're doing when it comes to this sort of thing. Still groaning? Have a go. It's free. The only thing you've got to lose is time and, if you're caught playing on the bus, dignity.

★★★★☆



DRONE

MAGAZINE



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TECH KNOW

THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY // THE COOLEST GADGETS

Reality Bites

The reviews are in, Facebook and Twitter are full of your friends wearing the helmet and scaring the cat – Sony's PlayStation VR entry into the Virtual Reality market is certainly off to a flying start.

After years (decades, even) in the wilderness, the buzzwords for gaming as we close 2016 are definitely Virtual and Reality. After the successful launches of the technically impressive but financially crippling Oculus Rift and HTC Vive, Sony has finally released their VR headset for the PlayStation4, and the good news is that it's a rather special piece of kit.

The standard headset will set you back £350, and on top of that you will need to buy the PlayStation Camera (assuming that you don't already own one) and a pair of Move Controllers to get the best out of it, but if you've been good all year and Father Christmas is being generous, then you'll enter a new world of gaming that promises to give you a depth of immersion and realism that's hitherto been unseen in console gaming.

Along with the headset you will also get a varied demo disc packed with short teasers and, if you buy the launch pack, a copy of the excellent VR Worlds – which is a compilation of five very different short games – but it's the variety of the launch titles

on PlayStation VR that will ensure you've got enough to interest you and keep your headset from gathering dust. From full price titles like EVE: Valkyrie and Battlezone to cheaper, shorter games like Batman: Arkham VR and the brilliantly titled Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes, there's enough quality games to prove the doubters wrong when they say that Virtual Reality is just a novelty. Add to that a range of games that come with additional VR elements and sub-levels – such as Rise of the Tomb Raider and Final Fantasy XV – and it's clear that Sony's vision of VR is here to stay.

In practice, the feeling of playing a VR game on the PlayStation4 is astonishing. The PS VR can run at either 90Hz or, in some cases 120Hz, with graphics whissing around at 120 frames per second, meaning that there's no latency and (hopefully) little or no motion sickness. The PS4 can pump out 1080p games with no problem at all, so the frame rate should never lag or stutter. Combine this with the incredible 360° vision and 5.7" OLED screen and Virtual Reality is a reality in the home at last. **GM**



THE PLAYSTATION VR TOP 10

The line up for the PS VR is perhaps the best range of launch titles we've seen for some time, including the likes of Batman, Rez and Until Dawn. The variety of gameplay on offer proves that VR isn't just a one-trick pony and has the potential to redefine our game playing experience. Here are the top ten titles we recommend you invest in, as well as a few upcoming gems to look out for.

Batman: Arkham VR

// PRICE, £15.99



One of the high points of the PlayStation VR line up has to be this Batman mini-game from the series' developers, Rocksteady Studios. There's only about an hour of gameplay (the price reflects that) but it's a superb experience from start to finish.

Battlezone

// PRICE, £49.99



Gamers of a certain age will remember the vector graphic delights of the original Battlezone – which was released in 1980. This update brings the game kicking and screaming into the modern gaming age with stunning graphics and multiplayer gameplay.

EVE: Valkyrie

// PRICE, £49.99



While we wait patiently for the next Ace Combat game, this is the best 360° dogfighting we'll get. Taking the classic EVE series and adding VR compatibility worked well when it was released on the Oculus Rift, and this conversion is just as good.

Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes

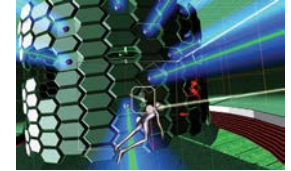
// PRICE, £11.99



A cheap VR version of 2015's surprise hit game, where one player is trapped in a room with a ticking bomb and the other players must give the instructions to defuse the bomb by deciphering the information in the manual. Huge fun and very original.

Rez Infinite

// PRICE, £24.99



Remember Rez? The short but oh-so-sweet psychedelic on-rails shooter that enabled you to create your own soundtrack as you defeated enemies? Well this is basically the same game, but updated with much better graphics and a swanky 360° VR viewpoint.

SuperHyperCube

// PRICE, £24.99



It wouldn't be a new console launch without a horribly addictive puzzle game, and in this case the game is SuperHyperCube. The object of the game is to guide a cluster of blocks through a continuous stream of walls. Easy to pick up and play, but impossible to master.

Thumper

// PRICE, £15.99



Like Rez, Thumper is another game where the gameplay source is inexplicably linked to the soundtrack. The developers describe it as 'rhythm violence', and although you can play it on a standard PS4, it's a much better experience with the VR headset strapped on.

Until Dawn: Rush of Blood

// PRICE, £15.99



Filling the horror category very nicely (and keeping the seat warm until Resident Evil VII Biohazard arrives) is a mini-game sequel of sorts to Until Dawn. Subtitled Rush of Blood, you have to battle through seven monster-filled levels on a terrifying rollercoaster ride.

Wayward Sky

// PRICE, £15.49



Mixing puzzles and third-person gameplay is this interesting and original title. You play the role of Bess, who needs to navigate an airborne fortress to find her father. Again, this isn't the longest gaming experience you'll find for VR, but it's definitely worth the small price tag.

Coming Soon...

// GRAN TURISMO SPORT



// STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT X-WING VR



// ROBINSON: THE JOURNEY
// RESIDENT EVIL VII BIOHAZARD



GOING PRO?

So what kind of PlayStation hardware are you going to need to make this PS VR spin?

If you're worried that the PlayStation VR won't work on the standard PS4 then fear not, as it'll run smooth as silk on the original console. In fact any version of the PS4, coupled with a camera and move controllers. If you're considering upgrading to a PlayStation Pro though, then you may notice the occasional bonus graphical bell or whistle, but it turns out that the rumours that the PS Pro was launched for the VR were totally unfounded.

And now... VR TV

Sky has launched the Sky VR app, it's available now for iOS and Android devices and turns your smart phone into a VR television set.



Clearly feeling left out of the VR party, Sky TV has produced a trailer-packed VR app with a range of 360° videos covering everything from entertainment to sport, news and music. In total, the app comes with 28 videos for you to stream direct or download to your device, and some of the highlights include two VR experiences from *The Jungle Book*, a Paul McCartney music video, an original VR animation called *Invasion* and a battle scene from the film *Suicide Squad*.



Sky also roped in David Beckham to film some segments from their Sky Sports coverage. "The team from the Sky VR studio came up with an incredible concept that shows the range of sport Sky offers. Being able to take other sports fans on a journey into some of the world's biggest sporting events was a unique opportunity," said David, not sounding like a press release quote at all.

You can watch the videos either on a smartphone as a

standard 360° video, or by playing them through a compatible headset such as Google Cardboard or Gear VR. We've given the new app the full Geeky Monkey test, and we've got to say that we're really excited about the prospect of VR TV. The only thing is that the videos take up a colossal amount of storage space, so make sure you delete all your rubbish games before trying it. **GM**

SAMSUNG ABANDON THE NOTE 7

It's not been the best month for Samsung. After a successful launch of their Galaxy Note 7 phablet, which was released to rave reviews, reports started coming in that some customers' phones had spontaneously exploded. After Samsung tried (and failed) to replicate the fault in-house, they came to the conclusion that the defect was caused by faulty batteries from one of the company's suppliers. After replacing the battery with one from a different supplier, Samsung continued the roll-out, but apparently that wasn't enough to cure the fault and the phablets continued to explode – around 100 in total. This left Samsung with only one course of action: "For the benefit of consumers' safety," commented a Samsung spokesperson, "we stopped sales and exchanges of the Galaxy Note 7 and have consequently decided to stop production." Purchasers of the Note 7 obviously get an immediate refund, but as you'd imagine, this is proving costly for Samsung. Despite being one of the largest hardware manufacturers in the world, some analysts predict that this whole fiasco could end up costing the company as much as \$10 billion.



Reassuringly Expensive?



Apple's new range of MacBook Pros are certainly pricey, but are you getting your money's worth?

As expected, Apple used their 27 October presentation event to unveil a new range of MacBook Pros, with updated hardware, a thinner design and a new 'Touch Bar' replacing the function keys at the top of the keyboard. Launched on the 25th anniversary of the release of Apple's first notebook, these new MacBook Pros are undoubtedly the finest laptops Apple has ever made. Starting with the design, the new Pro is around 17% thinner than the previous model, and it's obviously lighter, too. It's also removed the SD Card slot which while won't bother most people, was a larger irritation to the photographers looking to upgrade. Speaking of irritation, Apple has also upgraded their USB ports to either two or four Thunderbolt ones. These are smaller connectors that are also compatible with USB-C devices, but you will need to get an adaptor if you want to connect anything using the traditional USB-A connector.

POWERED UP

The new MacBooks are obviously more powerful, and although they still run an Intel i5 processor (which is beefed up to an i7 model on the 15-inch Pros), at least

they've upgraded it to the Skylake version. We'll need to run some proper benchmark tests to see just how faster it is, but it's safe to say that it'll be fast enough for most tasks. Apple made much of the MacBook Pro's gaming abilities, which are ably assisted by the improved graphics chips (Intel Iris on the 13-inch models and Iris Pro/AMD Radeons on the 15-inch ones), although as we all know, no one buys a Mac to play games.

TOUCHY FEELY

All-new for this round of Pros though is the Touch Bar. A Retina, multi-touch panel that can display either a series of icons relating to the software you're using, or allow you to customise it to features you regularly use – such as volume and brightness adjustment. There's even Touch ID built in for added security and to allow you to use Apple Pay straight from the laptop.

SO, IS IT ANY GOOD?

Well yes, obviously. These are without a doubt the fastest and sleekest MacBook Pros ever released by Apple. The lack of an SD slot and no standard USB or HDMI ports may irritate some, and the jury's still out as to how useable the Touch Bar will be – currently, it only really works with Apple programs and a select few third-party ones – or whether it'll just end up being a novelty we hardly use, but Apple's position as the premier laptop builder remains. Even if the competition is gaining ground rapidly. **GM**



THREE OF A KIND

MACBOOK PRO (13 INCH)

Processor // 2GHz dual-core Intel Core i5
RAM // 8GB
Memory // 256GB
Ports // Thunderbolt 3 (x2)
Price // £1,449

MACBOOK PRO (13 INCH WITH TOUCH BAR)

Processor // 2.9GHz dual-core Intel Core i5
RAM // 8GB
Memory // 256GB/512GB
Ports // Thunderbolt 3 (x4)
Price // £1,749/£1,949

MACBOOK PRO (15 INCH)

Processor // 2.6GHz/2.7GHz (both come with a quad-core Intel Core i7 processor)
RAM // 16GB Memory // 256GB/512GB
Ports // Thunderbolt 3 (x4)
Price // £2,349/£2,699



TOP GEAR

YOUR ROUND-UP OF THE HOTTEST NEW TECH GEAR AND ESSENTIAL ITEMS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE YOUR HEART RATE AND LOWER YOUR BANK BALANCE



Zinc Volt 80+

£129.99 // ZINCSPORTS.COM // AVAILABLE, FROM ARGOS NOW

You're never too old for a scooter, just check out your local park for proof with many a 'dude' wearing a Star Wars T-shirt pulling stunts. Well Zinc has taken scooters to new heights with the Volt 80+. It has everything you would hope for from a scooter – durable wheels, easy grip handles and anti-slip footplate – but with the added twist-and-go attraction of electric propulsion! Rev the Volt 80+ up and you can whizz along at 8mph, with only a short charge time between scooting sessions. Tired of standing? Well luckily there's also an optional saddle for a more relaxed ride. Scooters certainly have reached the next level.



Quadcopter Spot 2.0

£44.99 // REVELL.DE/EN // AVAILABLE, NOW

There's lots of drone fun to be had this festive season from the boffins at Revell Control. The German remote controlled vehicle company has just launched the Quadcopter Spot 2.0. It boasts 6-axis Gyro control and comes complete with a Micro SD card slot where you can store video from the built in HD camera. Admittedly it will take you a bit of practice to learn to fly one of these beasts, but once you've cracked it you can be enjoying drone flight videos over your house, or chasing the dog down the road. These mini-drones look very fragile, but they're actually pretty resistant to bangs and scrapes, and come with spare rotors, just in case.



Google Pixel

£599 [32GB] // MADEBY.GOOGLE.COM // AVAILABLE, NOW

You're not a tech company these days unless you have an iPhone knock off. Google has now got around to making their take on Apple's phone, calling it Pixel. They are boasting that it has the highest rated smartphone camera, working well in low light conditions, a battery that will last you all day (well that's not much of a claim), and then unlimited storage for your photos and videos so no more 'out of memory' messages. All well and good, but in the looks department they have just made a knock off iPhone 6. Why phone designers can't innovate, we'll never know.



PlayStation 4 Pro

£349.99 // PLAYSTATION.COM // AVAILABLE, NOW

Sony is claiming that they have made the world's most powerful games console. Yeah, yeah, we remember SEGA making similar claims about the Mega Drive 32X. Let's take a look under the hood. The reason for this bold statement is the PS4 Pro has an amazing 4K output thanks to its beefed up GPU and faster frame rates, that means gaming and movies with more pixels than your eyes could possibly see. We all thought 1080p was a miracle, but four times that resolution? Yes, it's beautiful, but not worth junking your crusty original PS4 for.

GEEK CHIC

ON THE FIRST DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY GEEKY FRIEND GAVE TO ME...



CHRISTMAS

Doctor Who Stockings Fleece

Three Whovian Christmas stockings on a cosy fleece, and officially licensed too. Can you work out who the Whos are?

£8 // THEMOVIEANDTVSTORE.COM

Deadpool: Merry Chimichanga

100% knitted, 100% official. Stay toasty with Deadpool this Christmas.

£40 // MERCHOID.COM

Assassin's Creed Jumper

An official Ubisoft product, celebrate with Assassin's Creed this Xmas.

£37 // GENIEGADGETS.COM

Die Hard Sweatshirt

Celebrate the greatest Christmas movie of all time with a sweatshirt - includes a back print with guns!

£28 // DARKBUNNYTEES.COM



HOODIES

Zelda: Hero of Hyrule Hoodie

Part hoodie, part cosplay, this one has a Hylian shield printed on the back to save you carrying one.

£45 // MERCHOID.COM

Breaking Bad Yellow Hazmat Hoodie

Keep out the cold this winter with this Heisenberg hoodie that zips up over your head to keep out the chills.

£40 // THEMOVIEANDTVSTORE.COM

Amiga A500 Workbench Hoodie

If you have ever been a victim of a Guru Meditation Error, you're going to love this.

£23 // ETSY.COM

Spider-Man: Premium Hoodie

There are hoodies, then there are premium hoodies. A top item!

£40 // MERCHOID.COM



BAGS

Ewok Mini Backpack

Cuteness factor 11 out of 10, this mini Ewok backpack is faux suede and fur. A great Christmas gift for someone?

£51 // THEMOVIEANDTVSTORE.COM

NES Controller Messenger Bag

There's nothing that says retro more than a bag with an NES joystick on it.

£28 // MERCHOID.COM

Rogue One Rebel Dopp Kit

'Tis the Christmas for Rogue One merchandise, here's a great bag.

£28 // THEMOVIEANDTVSTORE.COM

Dukes of Hazzard Messenger Bag

Nice and simple, just like the paint job on the General Lee in the classic 80's TV show.

£20 // ETSY.COM



ACCESSORIES

Boba Fett Mandalorian Socks

There's no excuse for boring socks these days, with this Boba Fett pair you will be the envy of your boring socked mates.

£8 // MERCHOID.COM

SEGA Mega Drive Wallet

Remember the golden days of gaming, each time you take out a plastic fiver.

£16 // MERCHOID.COM

Batcave Doormat

Did you know that Batman has a welcome mat made from coconut fibre?

£15 // RED5.CO.UK

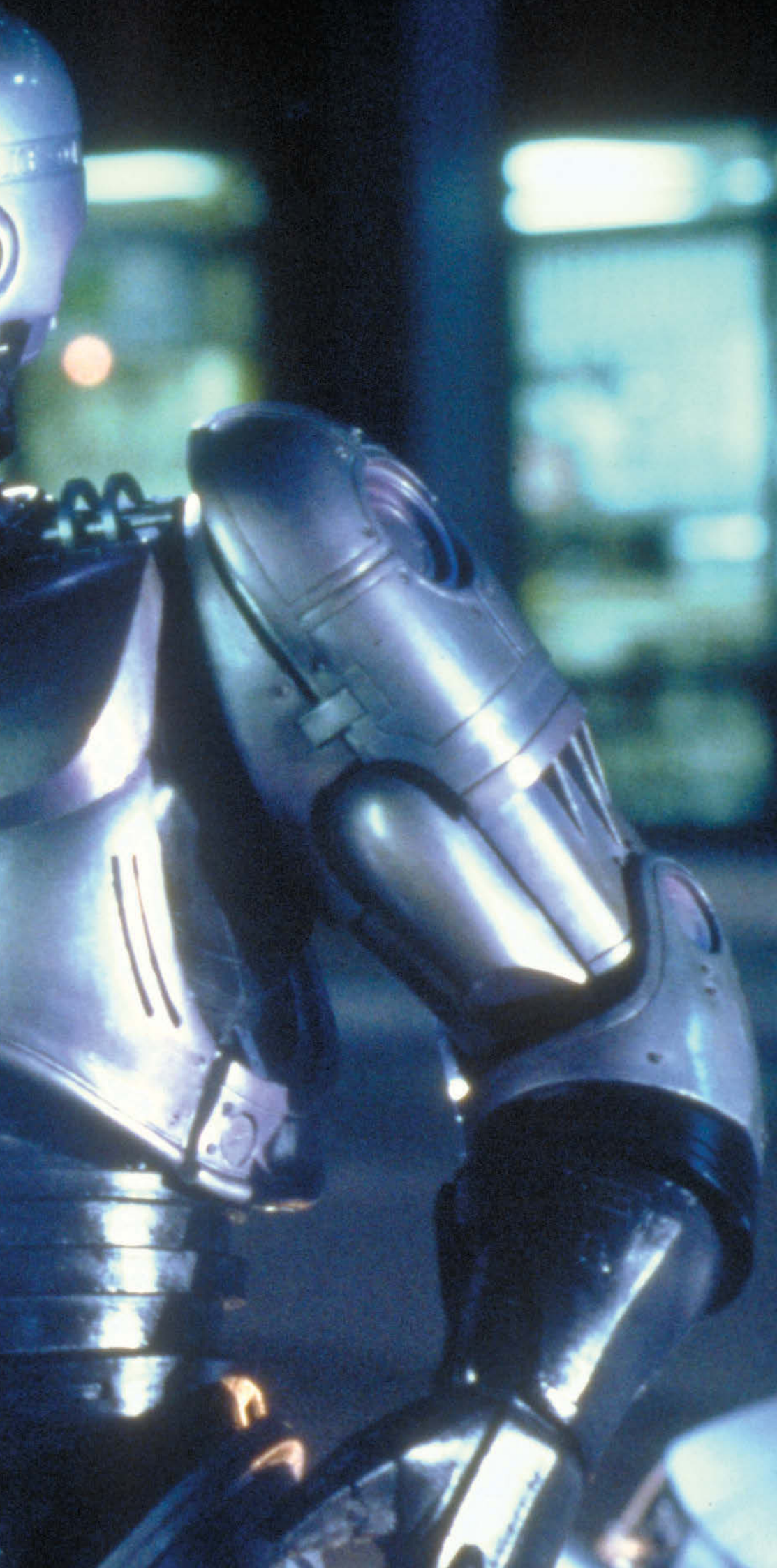
Mr Tea Cosy

We want one! Keep your teapot warm (ours is an R2-D2 one) with a cosy from The A-Team's Mr T himself... fool!

£12.50 // KAPOW GIFTS.COM

1ST: SERVE THE PUBLIC TRUST
2ND: PROTECT THE INNOCENT
3RD: UPHOLD THE LAW
4TH: CLASSIFIED

ROBOCOP'S PRIME DIRECTIVES



ROBOCOP

// 1987

directed by

PAUL VERHOEVEN

starring

PETER WELLER // OFFICER MURPHY/
ROBOCOP

NANCY ALLEN // ANNE LEWIS

RONNY COX // DICK JONES

The big summer movie of 1987, *Robocop* was a film that shouldn't have been such a hit with younger viewers, yet spawned toys, computer games and sticker albums. This was an 18-rated movie, with shocking scenes of hands being blown off, police officers murdered and thugs falling into vats of acid then walking around with their skin hanging off.

This story of a dystopian Detroit has themes of corporate corruption, media influence, greed, technology turned bad, artificial intelligence taking over the world and the police being unable to control what's going on. How did they manage to get the future so spot on back in 1987 you may wonder?

It's a movie that really does hold up to repeat viewing. Excellent direction from Paul Verhoeven, *Robocop* superbly brought to life by Peter Weller and amazing special effects on the suit, created by Rob Bottin who had just finished work on John Carpenter's *The Thing* at the time. The Robosuit was the most expensive prop, costing one million dollars. ED-209 was much cheaper, created by Craig Davies using stop motion animation.

TURNING THE CLOCK BACK TO CHRISTMAS 1982,
WE PLAY MB GAMES' FROGGER BOARD GAME,
AND WISH SANTA HAD BROUGHT US A GAMES
CONSOLE INSTEAD...



REMEMBERING...

FROGGER THE BOARD GAME



WHAT THE HELL IS THE FROGGER BOARD GAME?

We're on a bit of a roll with our replaying of classic board games based on 1980's videogames. We enjoyed Donkey Kong a lot, the mechanics still worked well with cardboard and plastic pieces. Pac-Man was a blast too, with giant Pac-Man pieces to chomp up power pills. Then we come to Frogger. Oh my, it seems that MB Games put their B-team to work on this one. The board and pieces are sparse: you get six frogs, two cars and four logs to play the game with. Then gameplay is laboriously slow, a dice roll giving you the number of moves you can make, then having to split these between moving your frogs, cars and logs. Of course, the idea is for one of the two players to strategically move logs and cars to splat their opponent's frogs, but playing out in super slow motion.

WHY DID YOU WANT IT?

Hang on, we didn't say we did! No, actually we would have wanted the Frogger Board Game back in the 80s because on the box it actually looks quite fun. Thousands of kids got this on the big day as it was a cheap alternative to buying a games machine for mum and dad. In 1982 you could only play Frogger in the arcades, where Konami's machine was doing great business. It would be a whole year later before the home computer versions started to appear – first on the Commodore 64 and VIC-20, then the cartridge versions on Atari 2600 and Colecovision. In a strange twist, Konami developed the game and SEGA dealt with the distribution rights. They sold licenses for both cartridge and magnetic media conversions, meaning C64 gamers had to choose which Frogger game they preferred as the machine could handle carts and tapes!

IS IT AS AWESOME AS YOU REMEMBER?

No, sadly. Some videogames obviously lend themselves to board game conversion more than others. The gameplay is tragically slow while the arcade original was spectacularly fast. It was all about lightning reflexes and daring, while this board game version is more about the luck of the dice and how much of a bastard your opponent is.

CAN I GET ONE?

Attics and basements all over the country are still teeming with beautifully preserved classic board games from the 1980s. People obviously did take their parents' advice and look after their toys, keeping the boxes in tip-top condition. On ebay (other auction sites are available) you can expect to pay around £30 for a mint condition Frogger, a bit less for one where the frog has been chewed by a dog.





**EXPECT TO PAY
AROUND £30 FOR
A MINT CONDITION
FROGGER, A BIT
LESS FOR ONE
WHERE THE
FROG HAS BEEN
CHEWED BY A DOG**



Don't think that turning videogames into board games is a modern idea. MB Games was doing it back in the Eighties.



TABLETOP

Words: ROB BURMAN

Rob was the editor of Tabletop Gaming magazine



THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE IN THIS MONTH'S ROLL OF THE DICE

Part of the beauty of tabletop gaming is that with a little perseverance you really can find a game that suits all tastes. There are so many different gaming experiences out there that you really can tailor a gameplay session to an individual. Do they like cerebral experiences? Take a look at something like Settlers of Catan. Do they like collecting sets of things, a little like Monopoly? Well, give Ticket to Ride a go. Do they like strategy videogames? Well, Forbidden Stars might be right up their street.

If, on the other hand, they like lightning quick games that involve shouting, the occasional bit of arguing and super-fast reflexes, then Dobble is the game for them. Just in case you're not aware of Dobble, it's like 'snap' on acid. You see, instead of just playing cards and waiting to match a single image, in Dobble you have circular cards with eight images and one of those eight images will match another picture on another card. No matter what the cards, there will always be one that matches... we can't possibly begin to fathom the mathematics, but rest assured it works. The fun comes when up to eight players are all desperately trying to find an image that matches their card before shouting it out.

So, you can kind of see where Asmodee was going with Star Wars Dobble (Asmodee, £13.99). After all, everyone loves Dobble and everyone loves Star Wars, so this should be a sure fire winner, right? The problem is, however, that the original Dobble works because the images are so simple: a key, flower, tree... but here the images are things like Jango Fett, a Bantha, Darth Vader, General Grievous, the... erm... guy playing the weird flute in the Cantina or that spaceship thing from the desert bit in Return of the Jedi. It just lacks that immediate sense of recognition and, even as huge Star Wars fans, it's sometimes tricky to vocalise the mildly obscure thing you recognise before someone else shouts something simple like Darth Vader.

**YOU MIGHT
HAVE SEEN
MEGA MAN THE
BOARD GAME
AND SUDDENLY
YOUR RETRO-
LOVING HEART
IS BEATING
FASTER THAN
MARIO KART ON
150CC SETTING**



THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT GAMING EXPERIENCES OUT THERE THAT YOU REALLY CAN TAILOR A GAMEPLAY SESSION TO AN INDIVIDUAL

While Star Wars Dobble challenges your hand-eye co-ordination, Timeline: British History (Asmodee, £13.99) is most definitely a more cerebral task. The game itself is superbly simple: you have five cards showing famous events in British history (the founding of the BBC, the publication of Animal Farm or the first Crufts show, to name just a few). Players must then play these cards into the correct chronological order. For example, I play 1922: 'The BBC is Founded' and you have 'first Crufts show'... was that before or after 1922? Some are slightly more obvious, such as England wins the World Cup, but others, like 'Britains First Nuclear Power Station Built' (1956, by the way) are far more challenging. Timeline is a wonderful family game that will be perfect to crack out at Christmas or a special occasion.

Finally for this update of everything boardgames, all you fans of classic videogames might have seen Mega Man The Board Game (Jasco Games, £73.99) and suddenly your retro-loving heart is beating faster than Mario Kart on 150cc setting. After all, it's themed around the classic videogame, it has artwork from the original 8-bit Mega Man, plus it comes with painted Mega Man heroes and enemies. In fact, the components are really great, it's just such a shame the game doesn't live up to them. You see, each turn a player must play through a 'level' of Mega Man while everyone else just watches and waits for their turn. While you're playing, it's fun, but while you're waiting, it's a real downer. Hardcore Mega Man fans may like the miniatures, but everyone else should pass. **GM**

There are many versions of the Timeline board game: inventions, science and discoveries, Star Wars and now the new British history.

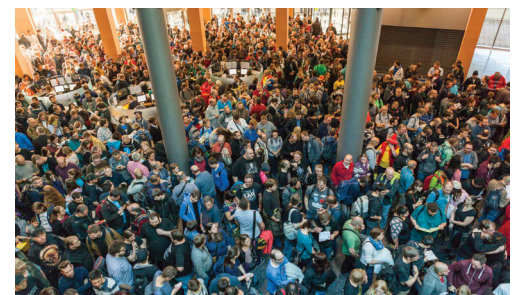


ESSEN 2016

If anyone ever scoffs at your wonderful tabletop gaming hobby with a derisory "huh, no-one plays board games anymore" then we've got some important facts for you to throw back in their face. Recently Europe's biggest tabletop gaming event, Spiel took place in Essen, Germany. This has always been a massive show (which has now been running 34 years) but this year it was more popular than ever.

More than 174,000(!) tabletop gaming fans descended on Essen for four days of fun, which is 12,000 more than 2015. In fact, so many people were in attendance that the organisers had to open the doors early in order to cope with the demand from people clamouring to get inside. Part of the reason people wanted to get inside first was because there are often limited editions of new games that quickly sell out and it's not uncommon to actually see people running (yes, running) to be first on a particular stall.

This year there were 1,021 exhibitors (compared to 911 in 2015) showcasing more than 1,200 new boardgame releases. Compare that to any other industry and it's not hard to argue that tabletop gaming is booming.



OUT OF THE DARKNESS

ALL ABOARD THE PORK CHOP EXPRESS AS GEEKY MONKEY TALKS LOST THEMES, WORLD TOURS AND CAREER REVIVALS WITH THE ORIGINAL MASTER OF HORROR, JOHN CARPENTER.

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

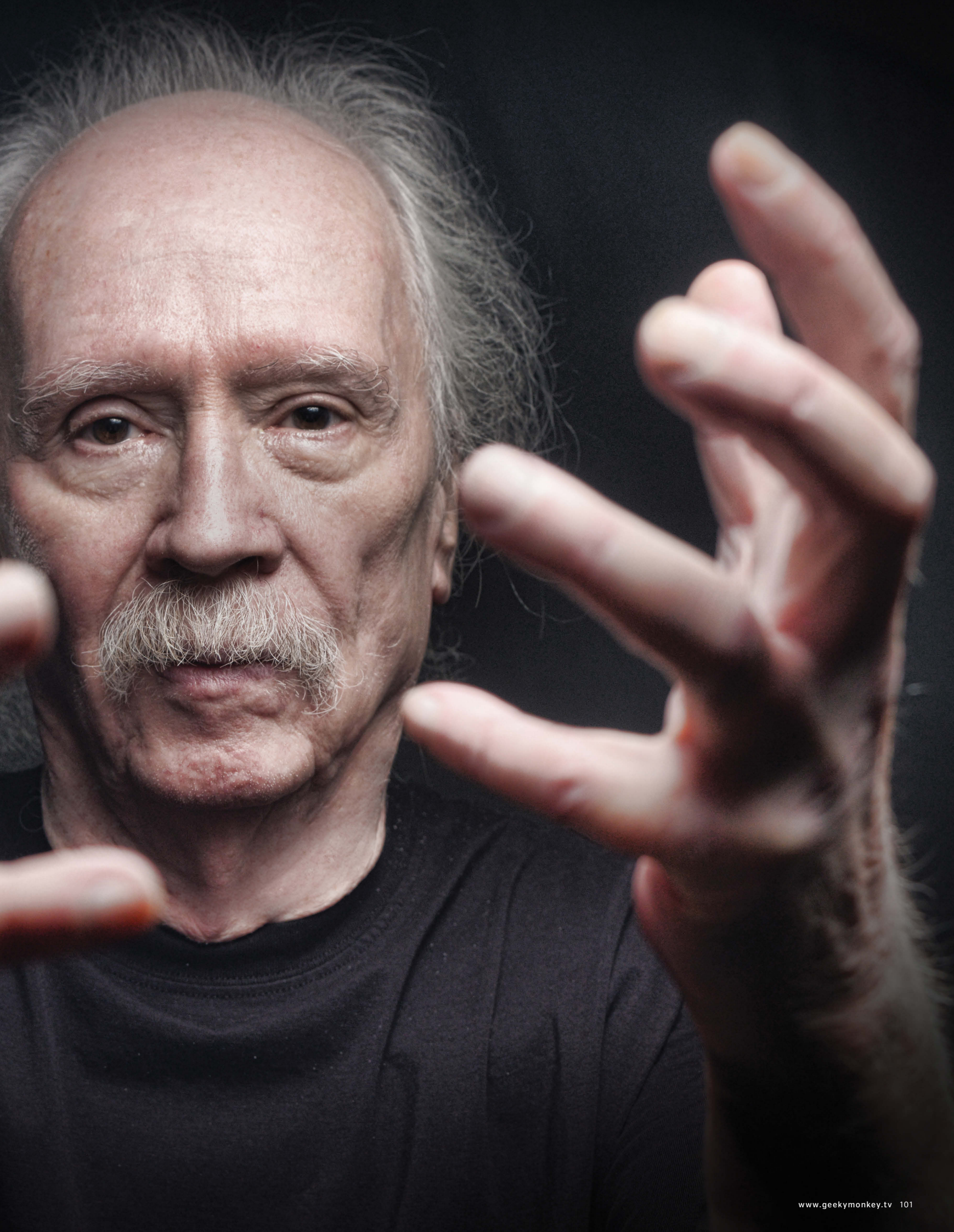
Sebastian is an entertainment writer and movie geek

John Carpenter is riding high right now. The original master of horror responsible not just for some of the most important terror tales of our time, but their legendary soundtracks too, is basking in the glory of two smash hit solo albums and a world tour that's taken him from the US to Europe and beyond; the iconic auteur sounds just like a giddy teenager while speaking to Geeky Monkey from his home in Los Angeles after a handful of sold out gigs saw the Halloween director bring his killer synth-based sounds to hordes of rabid fans on European shores.

While he's used to travelling the world to plug his massive back catalogue of features over the years, Carpenter tells us that this time the journey is an entirely different beast. "Travelling is something I know about, but this is going out on a show and performing in front of an audience, and it's really exciting, especially at my age," says the director. The shows, billed as live retrospectives, see Carpenter and his five-piece band blast out music from his albums, *Lost Themes* and *Lost Themes II*, as well as countless classics from his flicks.

Carpenter's signature style has always been synth heavy, but hearing classic themes from the likes of *The Fog* and *They Live* now fleshed out by the spectacular live band supporting him is frankly astonishing, and Carpenter looks incredibly at ease up there on the stage, despite confessing to feeling a little nervous at the outset of the tour.

"In the very beginning, before I did my first show, I was a little frightened, but as soon as we started playing; oh man, it was all good. I just felt so relaxed up there," he says. Carpenter is a filmmaker first and foremost, so it's not surprising the concerts are bolstered by swathes of visuals unfurling as the band whips through his roster of compositions. It's a phenomenal sight, and an essential experience if you consider yourself a fan of the horror maestro's imagery and, more importantly, his music. ►



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MAGAZINES

FREEMAGS.CC



“MOST OF THE FIRST ALBUM WAS IMPROVISED BY MY SON AND I OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS HERE IN MY HOUSE, AND WE WOUND UP WITH OVER 60 MINUTES OF MUSIC WHEN WE FINISHED UP”



Lost Themes, released in February 2015, was Carpenter's debut studio album. He followed it in April of this year with Lost Themes II.



While life on the road can be lonely, for Carpenter it's different, and far more enjoyable than the isolated press tours of yesteryear because two of his band members are part of the family – his son, Cody, and godson Daniel Davies. "It's just a joy to play with them, it really is just awesome. But we have three other members of the band and they're the rhythm section for Tenacious D and they are really, really excellent musicians. We are kicking it and having a great time."

Not a bad gig if you can get it, and it's something Carpenter is eternally grateful for; a second chance if you will, that started as an experiment and quickly turned into the first album, *Lost Themes*. "Most of the first album was improvised by my son and I over a period of months here in my house, and we wound up with over 60 minutes of music when we finished up," he explains. "My son then went to Japan to teach and I got a new music attorney who asked me if I had anything new, so I sent the album over and the next thing I knew we had a record deal!"

Released by Sacred Bones, the album emulates the brooding, sinister tones of his past film work, with each of the tracks serving as a sort of theme tune to a feature film that has yet to materialise. While some songs on the album sound like somewhat of a departure for the auteur, there are a handful that are instantly recognisable as Carpenter-esque, including the superb opener, *Vortex*, with its vibrant bass tones and catchy keyboard chords that hook you right from the get-go, much like the ones found in the opening credits of his feature films.

For Carpenter, creating music without imagery on a screen in an edit bay is an entirely new and ultimately liberating experience. "It's just a whole different story. Soundtracks are so different to this. This is for the music. This is pure, and it's really fun to do," says Carpenter.

"It's equally hard when you have to produce something, because you have to work to a deadline, but it's nothing like the pressure of making a movie. When I was doing that I was performing double duty. I was directing and I was doing the score. It was a nightmare; well, when I say a nightmare it wasn't all that bad, it was fun, but it was really hard work."

It was that extreme pressure that put Carpenter off directing for a very long time after the release of *Ghosts of Mars* in 2001. He would later remerge in 2005 for an episode of the first season of Showtime's *Masters of Horror* called *Cigarette Burns*, and contribute once again to the second season, before disappearing from the world of film and TV until 2010's *The Ward* with Amber Heard. "I just had to stop, because I was just burned out from that process. It was just too much. I had no life, but this is different and this is a lot of fun," says Carpenter.

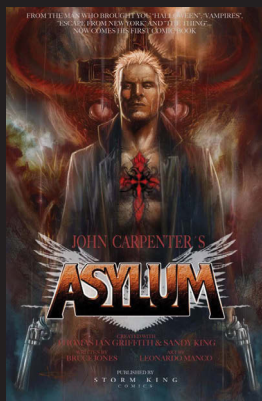
That said, he's quick to point out that he doesn't regret making those movies in the manner he did, instead he considers his numerous production roles in the likes of *Halloween* and *Escape From New York* as all practical. "When you're a student filmmaker or a low budget filmmaker you don't have any money to hire a composer. It's a lot of money to do that. Hiring an orchestra? It's inconceivable!" he says. "So what you do is what I did, you score your own movies, which is good and bad. I'm not an overly skilled synthesiser player. My chops are medium chops, but I had enough feel to score some of the movies I made. I knew what I wanted to do with them. It wasn't impossible and I felt I did okay in the end."

To he's scored 15 of his 18 films, including soundtracks for the likes of *Big Trouble In Little China*, *Assault on Precinct 13* and the daft but enjoyable *Vampires* starring the sneering vampire slaying James Woods. While he couldn't pinpoint an exact favourite, he's still pleased with the results from the majority of the films he's had a hand in scoring over the years. "There's a bunch of them that I think ►



MASTER OF COMICS

THE JOHN CARPENTER RENAISSANCE ISN'T JUST IN THE MUSICAL REALM, IT'S ALSO TAKING PLACE ON THE BLOOD STAINED PAGES OF THE COMIC BOOK WORLD.



Besides taking the music world by storm with his two Lost Themes albums, Carpenter is currently in the midst of a prolific boom in the comic book world thanks to his work in Asylum from Storm King Productions, a company he co-founded with his wife, Sandy King, coupled with superb continuations of the movie worlds he kick-started in *Escape From New York* and *Big Trouble In Little China* from BOOM! Studios.

For Carpenter, *Escape From New York's* Snake Plissken and *Big Trouble In Little China's* Jack Burton were the most obvious choices when it came to resurrecting the worlds he conjured up in film. "They're great characters and they're so much fun to work with." Even though each of the books has a writer attached, Carpenter refuses to take a back seat during the creative process, guiding the scribe and throwing his own ideas into the mix. "I've helped write them, and right now I'm working on *Big Trouble In Little China* and another book that combines Jack Burton and Snake Plissken together in one comic, which should be ridiculously funny."

His most recent comic book work, *Tales For A Halloween Night*, hit comic book shelves just in time for Halloween to rave reviews, serving as a sort of throwback to the notorious EC comics of the fifties, in particular *Tales From The Crypt*. "It's kind of a throwback to when I was growing up. We came up with a character that introduces all the stories, and we have these great artists illustrating. It's fun and it's way easier than waking up at five in the morning to go shoot a bunch of actors!"

"Well that's okay. I did okay with that". I don't think I'm a great composer; I'm not like one of the great masters. I just did it using synthesizers and now there's a big resurgence in interest in synthesizers and old synth music right now and I'm kind of the recipient of that nostalgia."

While the synth revolution has been quietly taking place for a while now with the help of soundtracks for films like *It Follows* or jazzy special edition reissues of classic film scores from labels such as Mondo and Waxwork, we well as albums from artists such as hugely successful Perturbator, it's been really pushed to the forefront of the music scene thanks to Austin band, *Survive*, who composed the music for the smash-hit Netflix series, *Stranger Things*.


For anyone with even a passing interest in the director's work it's clear that the show owes more than just its fair share of debt to Carpenter's directing style, but his soundtracks too, in particular the opening theme that truly elevates it to a new level of Eighties-infused brilliance. Carpenter hasn't caught the series yet, but he tells us he plans to once he settles back into life post-tour.

Of course, he's going to have to pull himself away from his games console first. Carpenter is a self-confessed gamer, and has said in previous interviews that next to watching basketball, playing videogames is one of his favourite pastimes. "I'm an avid gamer, I play all the time. When we're on tour we have a bus and we play them on there too," he tells us. "We didn't have a bus on the European tour, so I had to leave playing behind for a while, which was too bad." Carpenter's game picks are spread across a wide variety of genres; he tells us he's neck deep in *Fallout 4* and *Mirror's Edge*, while dabbling a little in the NBA titles in between bouts of gunning down mutants and barrelling across the rooftops of *Glass* in DICE's open world free-runner.

One facet of gaming he's not so sold on right now is the VR boom being ushered in by the likes of Sony with the PSVR kit or HTC's overly expensive Vive set-up. "I've seen where they are right now with it and it's really crude. They just don't have a good enough framerate, so it just doesn't look very good, and the problem is you can't move around very fast," says Carpenter. "In VR you have to go slow, so with the stuff I've watched you're sitting in a wheelchair so

**“I DON’T THINK I’M
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**“THE OLD MOVIE
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COMPARE IT. WHEN
THE AUDIENCES
STOP GOING TO SEE
SOMETHING, THEN
HOLLYWOOD WILL
CHANGE”**

ESSENTIAL MIX

FEEL LIKE DIVING INTO THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS’ KILLER BACK CATALOGUE OF SOUNDTRACKS? HERE ARE FIVE OF THE FINEST JOHN CARPENTER SCORES TO GET YOU STARTED...

[1976] ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13



A masterpiece from start to finish, the brutally menacing soundtrack to his 1976 police station under siege cracker is a truly unforgettable one, and has gone on to influence a whole host of electronic music producers and DJs over the years, including the likes of Afrika Bambaataa and Portishead’s Geoff Barrow.

[1978] HALLOWEEN



Much like John Williams’ spectacularly memorable score for Jaws, the genius behind Carpenter’s work on Halloween is its simplicity thanks to a 5/4 odd time signature that he learned on bongos before transitioning the tempo to piano years later, resulting in the greatest horror theme of all time.



Assault on Precinct 13 arguably features one of the most memorable title themes of any film released in the Seventies.

they can slow it down. It just won't handle it, but let's see. Maybe it'll be great, maybe it'll be a gimmick like 3D TVs."

Besides playing games, Carpenter has also been involved in the production of a number of titles over the years, including collaborating with comic book scribe and creator of 30 Days of Night, Steve Niles, on the story for FEAR 3, which hit consoles back in 2010. "That was fun. Warner Bros is a really nice company and Steve is a friend of mine, so that was extremely enjoyable," he says.

Like fellow horror director Guillermo del Toro, the Lost Themes composer has been pretty outspoken about wanting to get back into that world to craft something original. "I'd be interested in [getting into games] depending on the project. It's like movies or music, if it is something I'm interested in, then I would do it," he says. "I'm open to anything, even a child's game!" John Carpenter does a kids game? Somebody pick up the phone and call him right now.

With the tour winding down at the end of the year just in time for the holidays, the big question is what does the future hold? "I'll take a little time off, then maybe we'll have another album, and we'll just see what comes up. In terms of movie and television I'm developing some things that I might do. At my age you just take nice and slow," chuckles Carpenter. One genre we know he won't be dabbling in is super heroes, despite having numerous offers fielded to him over the years. "I'm just not that interested. It's just comic book stuff. I don't care for it."

While Carpenter may not have any immediate plans to direct something new for the big or small screen, Hollywood has other ideas – namely remakes of his back catalogue. A Big Trouble In Little China rehash is in development, while Predator producer Joel Silver is hard at work with Luther creator, Neil Cross, on a modernisation of Escape From New York that he claims is the first part of a planned trilogy somewhat inspired by Rocksteady's Batman games of all things.

Hollywood, it seems, is fresh out of original ideas and the studios appear only to be able to churn out two types of films right now: comic book movies and reworks of established properties. It's a dangerous situation that shows no signs of slowing down according to Carpenter. "People watch these movies. They – the studios – are only going to be in trouble if people don't go to the movies; that's when they'll change. Everybody's going to see this stuff, so you can't really knock it."

As for his own work being pilfered and tweaked for modern day audiences, Carpenter doesn't seem too phased at all (probably because so far they've all been terrible, save for 2005's enjoyable Assault On Precinct 13). "The old movie won't die. It's still there, you can still watch it; it's not been erased and you can watch it and compare it. When the audiences stop going to see something, then Hollywood will change. They respond only to audiences."

Interestingly, Escape From New York has already been remade, only without Carpenter's permission. That film was called Lockout

[1980] THE FOG



While it's not as minimalist as some of his other work, the score for The Fog is still one of his most atmospheric to date. With each track Carpenter crafts dread in spades thanks to a combination of haunting piano work and a few slick tricks guaranteed to send shivers down your spine.

[1981] ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK



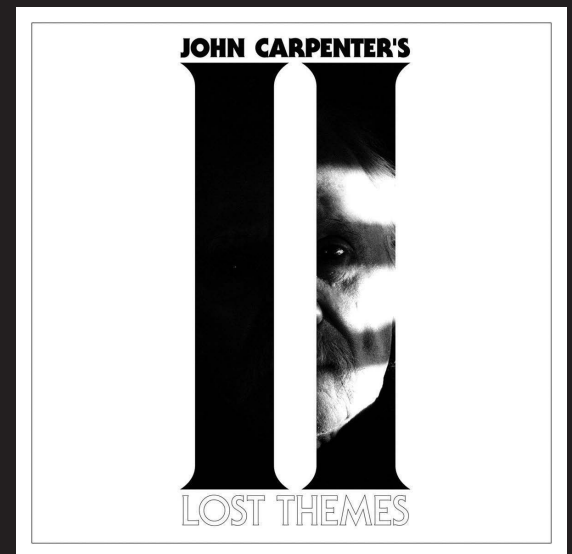
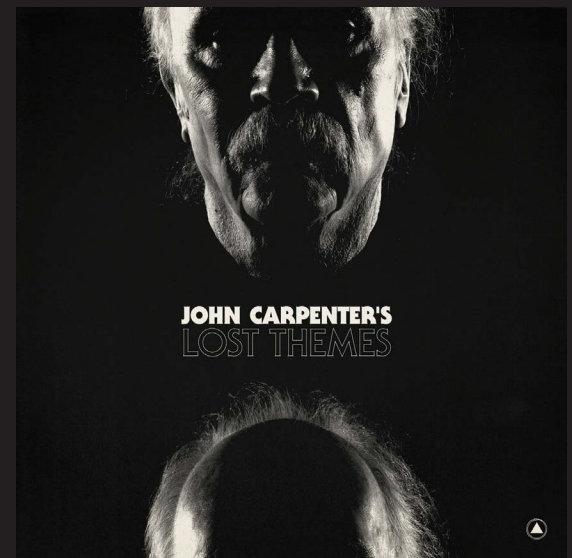
This collaboration with Alan Howarth resulted in a laundry list of killer tracks, including the iconic theme and best of all, the Duke Arrives, a cowbell-clumping monster of a track that's not just the best track on the album, but arguably one of Carpenter's finest moments throughout his illustrious career.

[1987] PRINCE OF DARKNESS



Prince of Darkness may have taken a bit of beating at the time of release, but it damn sure featured one of his most memorable scores. The album features a creepy, unsettling, skin-crawling line-up of tracks that oozed menace from start to finish. Check out the main title for the perfect example of this.

Carpenter slays the audience with a kick-ass live rendition of the theme from his 1988 satirical sci-fi horror, *They Live*.



“WE DON’T HAVE A SCRIPT YET, SO I CAN’T TELL YOU WHAT IT’S ABOUT, BUT I GUARANTEE YOU IT’S ABOUT HALLOWEEN NIGHT AND IT’S ABOUT A MASKED KILLER!”

with Guy Pearce, and earlier this year an appeal court in Paris ruled that the film’s creators, Luc Besson and Eurocorp, ‘massively borrowed key elements’ from his script for the 1981 classic starring Kurt Russell, resulting in him being awarded a meaty \$450,000.

It was a landmark ruling against the ‘naughty boys’, as Carpenter likes to call them, because the fact is plagiarism in film is exceptionally difficult to prove considering genres such as science fiction and action all share similar tropes. While he understands his work has influenced so many over the years, he feels that Besson and his cohorts went a step too far. “You don’t want to rip something off, you just don’t want to do that. Luc Besson and Eurocorp really got close to *Escape From New York* with *Lockout*; I mean it was really, really close. I’m not sure that was a good thing to do. They could have come up with something new.”

Remakes and lawsuits aside, there’s one project we’re keen to press him for information on before our time comes to an end and that’s his involvement in the proposed Halloween sequel with powerhouse horror studio, Blumhouse. After 38 years away from the franchise he’s finally returning to the world of Michael Myers to serve as producer and creative consultant in an attempt to revive the ailing slasher series

after Dimension Films lost the rights and their planned sequel from Saw writers, Marcus Dunston and Patrick Melton, fell apart.

“I’ve known Jason Blum for a while, he came to me and said ‘How do you feel about this now that the rights have diverted?’ and I said, ‘Sure, why not? I’ll give it a shot and I’ll also try to support the director,’” he tells us. “We don’t have a script yet, so I can’t tell you what it’s about, but I guarantee you it’s about Halloween night and it’s about a masked killer!”

Of course, the big question is why now? Why, after almost four decades away from Haddonfield does now feel like the right time to tussle with the franchise that put him on the map? “I found myself bitching all these years about them making another one, so with this one I thought, well, maybe I can get in and help and make something I’m proud of instead of sitting at home grumbling.”

With no director and no script in place as of writing, it remains to be seen whether or not this new Halloween will materialise anytime soon, but that doesn’t seem to bother Carpenter too much right now because he’s too busy basking in the glory of a massive career revival, an experience the Kentucky born director is relishing every moment of, and rightly so. “Well, it’s better than being called a piece of shit, I’ll tell you that!” he chuckles. Welcome back, John. Welcome back. **GM**



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BLADE

YEAR, 1998 // STUDIO, NEW LINE CINEMA // DIRECTOR, STEPHEN NORRINGTON
STARRING, WESLEY SNIPES, STEPHEN DORFF, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

WORSE THAN A VAMPIRE...

Words: HUGH DAVID

Hugh has watched every cult movie... at least twice.

Forget War Machine, Black Panther or Luke Cage, Blade was the first black Marvel big screen hero, and the first movie to prove Marvel's properties were financially viable in cinemas. At a time before nerds in or out of the film business were seen as bankable, Marvel's near-bankruptcy and commercial failure of their first wave of low-budget movies (Fantastic Four, Captain America, The Punisher) saw them selling off licenses to all comers. Fox picked up X-Men, Fantastic Four and Daredevil, Sony bought Spider-Man and indie horror specialists New Line wanted in, but having had recent success with films aimed at a black audience, they asked up-and-coming writer and self-professed comics nerd David S. Goyer if there were any black heroes in the Marvel back catalogue. He came back with Luke Cage and Blade from Tomb of Dracula, and the latter was within their price range.

New Line had three budgets in mind, depending on who they could get to star, with Denzel Washington at the top of their list. Wesley Snipes was further down, but they would only spend a certain amount if he said yes to the part. Goyer wrote for the biggest budget regardless, wanting to do the character justice regardless of performer, but he had hopes it would be Snipes. After three films and the comics version revamped to match his look, it's weird to think of anyone else in the role now, especially given the less-than-charismatic take on the role in the TV spin-off. Snipes effortlessly and simply became a newer, sleeker, cooler version of Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan's original four-colour hero, imposing a physical presence on the screen that was like nothing we'd seen that decade other than perhaps in indie comic book adaptation *The Crow*.

If Blade proved to studios the bankability of Marvel licenses on release in 1998, it also devised a series of visual ideas that would become the template both for future titles from other studios, and the Marvel Cinematic Universe itself. The use of Hong Kong-derived martial arts and fight choreography, the replacement of colourful spandex with leather and tactical gear, pseudo-science to explain superheroics and the supernatural, and the heavy use of CG for 'final boss' bad guys are all now par for the course. British director and former FX artist Stephen Norrington was responsible for all of the above; alongside fellow Brit director Paul W. S. Anderson, the two were responsible for (a) continuing the migration of 80's Hong Kong martial arts and wirework into American action cinema following Brandon Lee's untimely end, and (b) importing British dance and electronic music into American soundtracks, with the Blade trilogy looking to blend that with rap, never better than on the second film's star collaboration album. The opening scene, in which notorious former porn star Traci Lords leads future star of *The Shield* Kenny Johnson into an underground nightclub in a meat-packing plant which is revealed to be a vampire club, to the sound of the Pump Panel Remix of New Order's *Confusion*, remains as energising now as it was then. How it then transforms into a stylish brawl on Blade's arrival is still a masterpiece of editing and direction, and clearly influenced the Wachowskis when it came to *The Matrix* (as did the scene in the park later on when Stephen



BLADE PROVED TO STUDIOS THE BANKABILITY OF MARVEL LICENSES ON RELEASE IN 1998

Dorff's Deacon Frost confronts Blade in broad daylight while holding a child hostage).

Norrington and Goyer's innovations included moving vampires on from the Anne Rice mould to the Eurotrash look, throwing in punk, new wave and goth influences as well. Casting Kris Kristofferson, Udo Kier and Shannon Lee connected it with the legacies of the Western, horror and kung fu genres, while the presence of the great Jeff Imada as choreographer and stuntman reinforced the latter further still. But this remains Wesley Snipes' film through and through, and watching it again now proves without question that he deserves one more shot at the role in the current Marvel Cinematic Universe. **GM**

You can rent *Blade* on Amazon Video for £2.49, or New Line Cinema released a triple pack of *Blade*, *Blade II* and *Blade: Trinity* in 2014 on blu-ray and DVD.

WESLEY SNIPES

BLADE

STEPHEN DORFF



Against an army of Immortals,
one warrior must draw first blood.

BACKTALK

Go West

J.J.ABRAMS IS EXEC PRODUCING HBO'S WESTWORLD AND HAS TEMPTED HOLLYWOOD A-LISTER ANTHONY HOPKINS BACK TO TV, STARRING IN THE WILD WEST ANDROID DRAMA ON SKY1. WE CHATTED TO THE WELSH MEGASTAR...



ANTHONY HOPKINS

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

A MINOR OPERATION [1965]

// DR HARDING

THE LION IN WINTER [1968]

// PRINCE RICHARD

MAGIC [1978]

// CORKY

THE ELEPHANT MAN [1980]

// DOCTOR FREDERICK TREVES

THE BOUNTY [1984]

// LIEUTENANT WILLIAM BLIGH

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

[1991]

// HANNIBAL LECTER

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA

[1992]

// ABRAHAM VAN HELSING

LEGENDS OF THE FALL [1994]

// COL. WILLIAM LUDLOW

NIXON [1995]

// RICHARD NIXON

THE MASK OF ZORRO [1998]

// ZORRO

WESTWORLD [2016]

// DR ROBERT FORD

Westworld is based on Michael Crichton's acclaimed book and movie. Does it give us a deeper understanding of man, god and the creation of life even more than the original book?

I never gave much thought to utopias or dystopias, it's all about control. Which I find is pointless because there is no control, it's only uncertainty. Our agony is to desperately want certainties, but there is none, so that means we all want control. And we vote for politicians to give us the control, but it's all useless as we've seen in the past! There is a lot of pain associated with giving a guy control to rule a nation or a country, a revolution starter, a philosophical society... It usually ends up in the scrapheap.

The visitors to Westworld are in search of an authentic Wild West. Do you feel like we have become detached and are missing authenticity in our own lives, seeking those crazy adventures?

I don't know... I'm not ducking the question but I don't have enough knowledge, except for our little Mickey Mouse theories that we have alienated ourselves and the world. We're watching television all the time, getting all your information from that, so I stopped watching it. I don't want to know, not because I want to be ignorant, but I know that I will have no control and that's that box that feeds fear to the masses. Therefore, it's a conspiracy. Don't take me seriously on that, I don't believe in conspiracy theory but I think it's conscious, peculiar, monetary conspiracy to keep the networks going. Advertising, and then you put in a little piece of news, sound bites for all to be worried. How worried should we be? A little sound bite says, "You should be very worried." So you hear it before going to bed at night, you hear it as soon as you get up in the morning, "You should be very terrified!" It's all bullshit.

So how do you inform yourself, do you read a newspaper?

Why do I need information? It's gonna come through to me anyway. If you feed into it, it's like obesity. It's like being told if you eat all this junk food, you are gonna get fat, die from diabetes, heart disease, all of that... You turn on the TV, you watch all of that and you're going to poison your brain, your psychology, your outlook in life, you'll become a cynic, miserable... forget it! Nihilist! I don't need to watch it, who cares?! The outcome is those great visionaries that say they are gonna change your life, gonna make everything okay for you... oh yeah?

Are you talking about politicians?

Anyone, not just them, everyone who says they have the answer... There is no answer!

What was your attraction to doing this TV show?

I haven't done TV for years. HBO has got a great reputation and it's a very interesting part to play. Oddly enough for a man who is not about control or certainty, they give me those very controlling parts to play. It's a paradox at my age. I guess I know how to look like a control freak, but I'm not. I hope, I consciously try not to exert control over anything or anyone and especially over myself. It doesn't include being disciplined, it just means I lighten up on oneself by lowering expectations... Actually, removing the ego will give you a much more peaceful life so I can't take what I do that seriously (laughs). I do it because they pay me, but I do my job, I show up, be kind, happy, have some fun, but I don't take myself seriously. I always tell people to "lighten up."

Your character is a god-like figure in some ways?

I honestly don't know, because I when I asked Jonathan [Nolan, co-creator] what was happening to this guy he said he didn't want to tell me, he is very secretive about it. Tremendous secrecy on the set, nobody is allowed to look at the pages or see if there is a script. I understand it... It's an odd way of working but I guess that's the thing now, people take everything so seriously, nobody is allowed to know what's going on. But it's fun for me because I like to be mischievous, I tease them. I say, "No, I don't want to do it that way, if you want to do it you are gonna have to get another actor"... That's okay, they have a good spirit... I love to tease people so with this one, I have no idea which way the character is going. I got a hint that this man is brilliant, a visionary control guy, and there are things that are not very nice about him.

How do you find TV as someone who is known for not liking to repeat himself?

Yes, I don't know what is the agreement but I'm looking forward to the next batch of things, but I have no idea where it's going. There is a very interesting philosophical little piece which I was interested in, he talked about the bicameral mind and Ford talks about Michelangelo where some years ago, a neurologist at the Sistine Chapel looked up and saw a human brain with a stem and a pineal gland in the fold of God's garment. Michelangelo



used to go to graveyards and get bodies, carved them up, dissected them and again in fact, the essence is that the divine is possessed already in us, maybe in the pineal gland, where all ideas come from. All creative ideas come from that. It's maybe not up there but it's in everything. It's a very interesting thing from 500 years ago but I don't know where my character is going.

What is the appeal of doing a Transformers movie?

Michael Bay and other great parts. Another control freak! Another man who is in control of everything... I don't know why they give me these parts, maybe I look like a control freak!

Are you OK with not knowing how your characters evolve?

Yes, it's like not watching the news. You are gonna find out sooner or later, at the end of the day! I don't like to examine, I don't like to be specific about things, I don't like things to be locked in to opinions, to ideas... Maybe I'm not smart enough but I'd rather keep it light. Sometimes people ask me questions, they are surprised when I say I don't know, they can't believe it, I'm supposed to know! But why should I? I'm gonna die someday, as we all are, to embrace uncertainty, the chaos... it's finally meaningless, isn't it?

Do you think people have the wrong impression of you because you play those control freaks? You are forevermore associated with Hannibal Lector for example?

Yeah... I play piano, I paint. See that's unexpected! I used to draw but my wife suggested that I started painting when we got married. She made me paint 75 gifts for our guests and then she organised a company of fine art, and I have shown in Aspen, Maui, Palm Springs and I'm a big deal in Las Vegas. I'll get one in Silicon Valley next year so I'm going to get busy again painting.

To finish on a lighter note, how often do you get back to your homeland of Wales?

I haven't been to Wales for a year. I was in England last year doing a film. I wanted to go to Wales but I didn't have time, the filming schedule was so tight, but I'm going back to do Transformers with Mark Wahlberg and Michael Bay, so I'll probably get down to Wales to see some friends. I love going back! **GM**

Westworld is showing on Sky1, or via the NowTV app.



I HAVEN'T DONE TV FOR YEARS. HBO HAS GOT A GREAT REPUTATION AND IT'S A VERY INTERESTING PART TO PLAY

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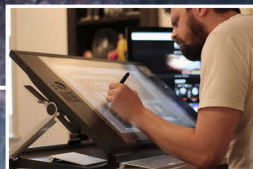
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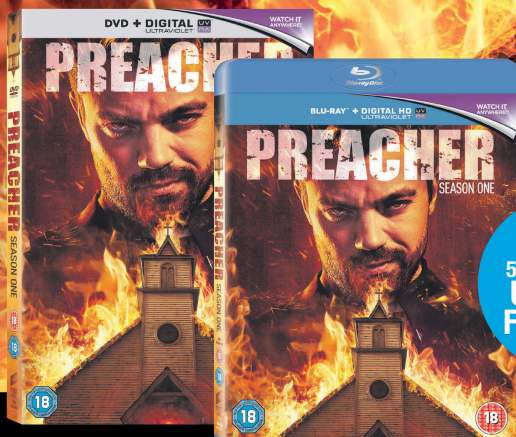
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